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padipur: a central terai village¹

Dor Bahadur Bista

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Village

1. Situation. The village of Padipur lies on one side of a gravelled motorable main road running between two district headquarters in the Central Terai. It is located at a distance of just over a mile from the headquarters of its district. A cart track passes through the village at right angles to the motorable road and goes up to the Indian border which is less than three miles away. A total of 155 households are scattered on either side of the cart track going south from the main road.

2. Origin and History. No one in the village has any idea how old the village is, although an off-hand guess would suggest that one hundred and fifty years or more have passed since it was founded by immigrants from the adjoining districts of Bihar in India. It was founded, maintained and controlled by people of Indian origin under the general administration of a Bada Hakim (the chief administrative officer of His Majesty's Government in the district) and his staff from the nearby district headquarters until a member of the Shah family was given this village along with nine other villages as tax free Birta land about 42 years ago. After this, the Birta owner's family administered the village until 1959 when the Birta system was abolished and the land was returned to government control once again.

In 1954 Padipur came under the Tribhuvan Village Development plan, and a committee of village leaders was made responsible for all development activities until 1961. It was during this period that the village for the first time saw some responsible steps initiated by the Central Government. Since 1962 they have had a village panchayat which continues to administer Padipur along with three other smaller villages. Padipur comprises four of the nine wards of the Panchayat and Pradhan Panches have been elected mostly from among its inhabitants.

During the general election of 1958, the village was split into two groups, Nepali Congress and Gorkha Parishad.

B. The People

1. Caste and Religious Groups. The total number of 155 households comprises eleven caste groups. For the purposes of this report, the 13 Mussulman families have been included as one of the low caste groups in the caste hierarchy, rather than as a

separate religious entity, for that is how they are regarded by the Hindu majority of the village.

The caste divisions are as follows:

<u>Caste groups</u>	<u>No. of Household</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
1. Brahmans	4	2.6
2. Chhetris	3	1.9
3. Kanu, surnames: Sah, Sahu (businessman's caste)	78	50.3
4. Ahir, surnames: Yadav, Raut (milkman's caste)	11	7.3
5. Dhanuk, surname: Mahato	15	9.7
6. Hazam, surname: Thakur (barber's caste)	1	0.6
7. Lohar, surname: Thakur (blacksmith's caste)	1	0.6
8. Teli (oil presser's caste)	13	8.4
9. Musalman (Muslim)	13	8.4
10. Dhobi (washerman's caste)	10	6.5
11. Chamar (scavenger's caste)	6	3.9
Total	155	100.0

2. Occupations.

A. The four Brahmin families are all of Pahadi origin. They came originally to the village as the personal staff of the Birta owner's family. Now they are permanent inhabitants of the village and own some properties of their own. Even today they work as the agents and bailiffs of the Shah families who still have some lands, though no longer as tax-free Birta owners. None of these Brahman families work as priests. One of them maintains a tea stall combined with a pan shop at the main road. It is mainly looked after by the older sons. The father is a member of the Padipur Gaun Panchayat.

B. The three Chhetri families listed includes two Shah families, one of which is an absentee land holder. The second Shah family regularly visits the village, though permanently based in Kathmandu. The third Chhetri family serves as bailiffs for the Shahs and permanently resides in Padipur with some property of its own. All three Chhetris have outside sources of income in addition to the land.

All other members of the village are primarily farmers with a few still maintaining their traditional non-farming professions as part-time or side jobs. In such cases one or two family members look after the "profession" while the other members of the family serve as full-time farmers.

C. The Kanu Caste is traditionally associated with trade and business, but there are only 11 Kanu families (14% of the total number of Kanu families) actually engaged in the buying and selling of commercial goods on a very small scale. With one exception, they are all poor and do not possess enough land for self-sufficiency. The part-time occupation of trade, therefore, is a supplement required for their subsistence. Besides the 11 Kanu families, Padipur has one Pahadi Brahman family and one Dhobi caste family engaged in trade. Farmers selling their surplus production are not considered as traders.

D. Ahirs are traditionally known as the milkman caste, but they do not specialize in this trade any longer even if they may have done so in the past.

E. Dhanuks are known to have served as house servants or personal attendants of rich people. In this village, there is only one Dhanuk family which serves one of the Shah families whenever they visit the village and the bailiff's almost regularly.

F. The Hazam family serves as part time barbers in addition to farming. They receive $\frac{1}{2}$ maund of paddy at the time of harvest for grooming one person throughout a year. These arrangements have been made with several families in the village.

G. The Lohar family has a smithy where agricultural iron tools are forged and repaired. They usually have permanent clients who pay them in kind once a year, but will work for cash, too, when the occasion arises. In the caste of permanent clients, the yearly charge is based on land ownership or the number of plough bullocks owned. For example, when a Lohar works for a family which owns 5 bighas of land or one pair of plough bullocks, they make and repair one plough share, two sickles and one hay-chopping knife. In return, the client supplies iron rods and one maund of paddy (worth Rs. 24/- at the time) during harvest time.

H. The Telis are of the oil presser caste, but none of them in the village actually engages in this profession.

I. The Mussulman are poor agricultural laborers. Two out of 13 also have a few client families in the village whom they serve as barbers.

J. Although Dhobis are washerman by caste most stick exclusively to farming. One exception is a man who keeps a part-time shop selling a small quantity of consumer goods. (cf. c. above).

K. Chamars are untouchables and menial workers, scavengers by tradition. All six of the listed Chamar families do own some of their own land and also cultivate as tenants of land belonging to other people in the village.

3. Family Composition. Though group feeling is strong among families of all castes, it is particularly so among the well to do. The poorer people are more concerned with keeping themselves alive, and the feeling of kinship appears less compelling. Social and ritual occasions, however, bring all kinds of kinspeople together. This helps to maintain regular contacts amongst members of the kin-groups whether they are related to it by blood or by marriage. Every village practices exogamy, that is, marriage partners are arranged from a village other than their own. Therefore there are no affinal relatives living within the village.

Of the total of 155 families, sixty-eight families or 43.9% were found to be tied with 6-7 other families of common descent. Thirty-five families belonged to groups of 4-5 families; twenty families belonged to groups consisting of 2-3 related families thirty families were not related to anyone in the village. (See Table II).

Even within rich families differences of interest arise which could develop into serious animosities. One of the two richest families in Padipur has been split since last year into two groups and one of these has gone so far as to support a rival faction in the village. More about the nature of factions will be discussed below.

4. Factions and Associations. Padipur village has several different types of informal and flexible associations which usually develop out of tradition and history rather than from any deliberate attempt at organization. The only organized group is for the purpose of elections. The traditional groups are formed by people of common caste and subcaste. Common economic interest such as borrowing and lending between landowners and tenants also leads to group formation.

Associations are formed most often by the kinship group, but other interests sometimes intervene. Thus in Padipur there are family groups and at the same time political groups which cut across all family group lines. For example, certain members of a rich Ahir family are actually rivals when political activity is involved, though for ritual and social purposes they group with their own cousins.

There are two main political factions in the village and the leaders of each faction represent two different caste groups, though their following cuts across all caste lines. Faction A is led by a Kanu and Faction B by an Ahir.

Padipur A Central Terai Village 5

<u>Caste Group</u>	<u>Faction A No. of Families</u>	<u>Faction B No. of Families</u>	<u>Neutral No. of Families</u>
Brahman	1	-	3
Chhetri	1	-	2
Kanu	45	30	3
Ahir	7	4	-
Dhanuk	12	3	-
Hazam	1	-	-
Lohar	1	-	-
Teli	12	1	-
Musalman	8	3	2
Dhobi	4	6	-
Chamar	6	-	-
	98 (63.2%)	47 (30.3%)	10 (6.5%)

Out of a total of 155 families, only 8 do not side with either of the factions and two families do not live within the village proper. Six out of 8 neutral village families are relatively self-sufficient. The two poorer ones are Musalman families. The six self-sufficient families are Kanu, Brahman and Chhetri. Large numbers of other poor families are not independent or even neutral because they are sharecropper tenants of a rich family group or are in debt to it. Thus a large degree of partisanship is not out of choice, but due to economic dependence on faction leaders who happen to control large areas of land and other resources. This will be discussed in greater detail under land ownership.

Factions and group differences, as they exist today, are serious with very strong feelings of hostility. No one is certain as to when the rivalry first began. However, the history of leadership in the village may give us some idea as to what caused the formation of the two rival groups.

During the Rana days, the Shah family was the Birta (tax-free) land owner and as such the established authority which had administrative responsibility and exercised political leadership in Padipur as well as in a number of neighboring villages. When the Ranas were driven from power in 1951, there came a wave of political consciousness throughout the country which brought some changes in attitudes of the people. Naturally, Padipur was affected too. This not only reduced the influence and power of the Shah family over the villagers, but also encouraged the lesser leaders of the village to try to establish their own authority.

It was at this time that the competitive feeling among a few ambitious and well-to-do families in the village had its start.

Meanwhile, political parties with their high commands in Kathmandu were trying to extend their organizational arms down to the villages. Padipur, at first, established a village unit of the Nepali Congress Party through the initiative of an ambitious young man. The natural consequence of this was that a second well-to-do man in the village, who did not get along too well with the former, supported the Gorkha Parishad Party. The Nepali Congress and Gorkha Parishad were bitter enemies at the central level. From this time on, two formal groups came into existence in the village. Since there are no political parties in Nepal today, I shall call the former group (Nepali Congress) Faction A, and the latter group (Gorkha Parishad), Faction B.

During 1956 Mr. Shah, the Birta owner, died leaving a widow and minor children. Mrs. Shah was unable to command the respect of the villagers, so they transferred their support to the new faction leaders. This increased the size of the groups and made them stronger than before. During the 1958 election campaign both groups supported their respective candidates very strongly. This led to deeper feelings of animosity between the two groups. Faction A leader was the Congress Party candidate for Parliament from the district, whereas Faction B supported the Gorkha Parishad candidate from a different village. The latter was elected. This was more than enough to formally widen the rift in the village. Until that time it had been more a question of competitive feeling between personalities.

With the abolition of the Birta system in 1959, the residual influence or power of the Shah family was completely gone. The family had no interest in the village other than the property they owned. Now more villagers were forced to seek loans and other help from the faction leaders. This further increased the size and strength of the rival groups. Both groups felt confident enough to openly challenge each other.

After the 1960 change in the Government, the Faction B leader went into exile in India. He now lives there with his mother's family. Meanwhile, his father assumed the leadership of Faction B. The power and influence of Faction B waned after the departure of its original leader and again after a dacoity described below.

5. The Dacoity. One night at the beginning of 1965, there was a big dacoity in Padipur, during which the house of the Faction A leader was robbed of about Rs. 50,000/- worth of cash, gold, silver and other movable property (the figure given by various informants ranged from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 100,000 worth of property and Rs. 50,000 was the estimate I accepted as reasonable), and the brother of the Faction B leader was robbed of properties worth

Rs. 20,000. The house of the Faction B leader himself was quite untouched. Some misunderstanding was already developing between the Faction B leader and his brother. This case of dacoity in which Faction B leader's house was "intentionally" spared while his brother "as well as the Faction A leader" were robbed, presented enough "evidence" for everybody to suspect that after all the dacoity was instigated by the exiled Faction B leader himself. Furthermore, the dacoits apparently came from across the Indian border and escaped back in the same direction. This supported the suspicion that the gang was led by none other than the B leader himself. As a result the Faction B leader was abandoned by his own brothers, their followers and a few neutral people in favor of the Faction A leader. At this time, too, the Faction A leader and his followers became more seriously active against their rivals. The rival groups were, to all appearances most unevenly balanced.

6. Election of Pradhan Panch. There was a Gaun Panchayat election of Pradhan Panch during the last week of December 1966. Ram Raj Ahir, the leader of Faction B and Shiv Narayan, the nephew and a member of the family of Hira Lal Sahu, the Faction A leader, were the two contestants. Everybody in the village including Shiv Narayan was confident that Shiv Narayan would win because Padipur has four out of nine wards of the Gaun Panchayat and he had an absolute majority in the village, in addition to reasonable support from other settlements constituting the five other wards. But Ram Raj Ahir was able to win an upset victory. This surprised everybody and also taught the lesson that economic domination does not necessarily coincide with political alignment. It was largely the approach at the time of election, both by the candidate and his agents, that made the difference. Some people presumed at the time, that mainly the fear of the exiled Faction B leader, who was suspected to have directed the earlier mentioned dacoity in the village, had caused many people to vote for his father, Ram Raj Ahir.

II. AGRICULTURE AND RELATED FACTORS

A. Land Area

Land in Padipur, as in the rest of the Terai, is measured in terms of bighas, katthas and dhurs. 20 dhurs make 1 kattha and 20 katthas make one bigha. One bigha is roughly equal to an acre and a half. The average size of each plot of land is roughly 5 katthas.

The total area of land cultivated by Padipur village is 316 bighas and 10 katthas. 48.1 per cent or 152 bighas, 5 katthas, 8 dhurs lies within the village boundary of Padipur and the remaining 51.9 per cent or 164 bighas 4 katthas, 12 dhurs lies within neighbouring village boundaries and outside of Padipur.

B. Tenancy Rights

Traditionally tenants did not establish any right or authority over the land merely by cultivating it for a certain period of time. Now Land Reform regulations dictate, that the cultivator established his right of tenancy ownership after he cultivates land for one season. The majority of Padipur tenants, because of their economic dependency upon the rich are in the grip of the landowners. Therefore, they do not claim the tenancy right even though they would very much like to do so. Thus the Land Reform regulations were very easily circumvented to the apparent advantage of the landowners. 57.9 per cent or 183 bighas 6 katthas of land is being cultivated by the owners themselves and the remaining 42.1 per cent or 133 bighas 4 katthas has been leased out to tenants. (See Table VII.)

C. Credit

Only eight families, 5.2%, were found to be lending cash and kind. The number of people who are indebted to them in terms of cash was 54, or 34.8% of the total. This does not give a true picture of the tremendous economic dependence of the majority, because the poorer people do not borrow only money. Their need more often is for food rather than for cash per se. The great majority of the people are indebted to the landowners in terms of paddy. 74.2 per cent or 115 families are in paddy debt as compared to 34.8% or 54 families in cash debt. Eleven families or 7.1% find their income and expenditure even. Twenty-one families are lower caste, poor, landless farm laborers who do not incur any amount of debt worth noting. They are also engaged in some other occupation which apparently makes them "self-sufficient." (See table V).

Cash borrowing has never been for agricultural purposes. It is either for marriage expenditures or for other similar needs. For agricultural purposes grain is borrowed. The borrowing and lending usually takes place in April, May, or June because that is the time most people run out of stock. The repayment of the grain is made at the time of harvest during September, October, and November.

The rate of interest is "five for four", that is, when people borrow four units they have to return five units of the same kind of grain. At the time of weighing they have to add another quarter of the interest extra per unit which is all calculated in grains. This amount is called sukhawan, the security against the quantity that may get lost while drying the grain. But that adds up to 25 per cent plus $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, a total of $31\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, not per annum, but for the period June-October, November, or December. Loans are never carried beyond the period June-November. Borrowers must pay up in order to be eligible to borrow the following spring.

Sometimes, if the amount borrowed is considerable, the borrowers have to sign a bond paper mortgaging their own land. Even though the arrangement and the understanding is one of mortgage, the lenders actually get a paper of sale for the land. The paper owners can, if they so choose, seize the land at any time as compensation for the amount lent. This puts people at the mercy of the land-owner-creditors. During the Village Development days some villagers tried to organize a cooperative society, but it did not receive any support from the rich because it affected them adversely. The poorer people were too ignorant, fearful and lacking in initiative to support it actively. It died out after a few months.

D. Yield and Cost of Land

The people always talk about 20 maunds of paddy being the standard yield of their land. Our calculations show 21 maunds per bigha is the overall average. We actually measured three separate plots (one each of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class land) employing the measurement units used by and familiar to the local people (See appendix). These parcels of land can be used as "demonstration" plots to measure comparative yields in future years as agricultural practices change.

The cost of average land at the present (1968 ed.), is Rs. 2,000 per bigha. Irrigated land is more expensive.

E. Division of Yield

All rented land has a uniform system of sharing yield fifty-fifty between the owner and the cultivator, excluding the amount of seed. The owner has to pay the government revenue for the land, which is Rs. 35 per bigha out of his own share and the balance is his net income, at least theoretically. In actual fact he gets much more than fifty per cent through the collection of charges for the lending of grain to the tiller.

The average paddy production of the majority of the land being 21 maunds per bigha, the landowner and the tenant should receive 10.5 maunds each given the prevalent arrangement of fifty-fifty shares. The actual result is very different. When newly harvested paddy is threshed and heaped in a barn, the first thing the villagers do before weighing is to offer some flowers to the god of food harvest, placing them on top of the heap of paddy, and praying for the maximum weight. Then about a seer of paddy is taken from the top and placed aside as an offering to the god. This amount, at the end of the weighing, is taken by the village priest. Secondly, a maund and a half per bigha of land is weighed and set aside as seed. This is taken by the landowner. The remaining $19\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy, the net yield per one bigha of land is divided equally between the landowner and the tenant. Then

out of the tenant's share of the 9-3/4 maund is taken the land-owner's loan to the tenant plus the 31.25% interest.

The average tenant family usually borrows six to seven maunds of paddy which is calculated to be the required amount for cultivating one bigha of land. Families cultivating more than one bigha are usually self-sufficient as they own some of their own land. They do not have to borrow much from others. But in the case of the majority of the tenant cultivators roughly 8 maunds, including interest, is taken by the landowner from the tenant's share of 9 3/4 maunds per bigha. This leaves the tenant less than two maunds for his own use.

By relating the various factors it is estimated that out of a total yearly production of 6636 maunds (average approximate production per bigha 21 maunds):-

65.3% of the total yield is taken by 8.4% or 13 families
34.7% of the total yield is taken by 91.6% or 142 families
Compare Tables V. thru X.

F. Division of Land

29.2% of the total land is owned by 91.6 or 142 families
70.8% of the total land is owned by 8.4% or 13 families

This shows the division of the yield very close to the actual distribution of land even though the percentage of land cultivated by the tenants presents a different picture (Table VII).

G. Crops

Villagers use two or three different varieties of paddy, but by far the most popular is called laji which gives greater yields than other varieties. Rich people grow some finer quality paddy for their own use even though the yield is less than that of the coarse variety.

There are two main planting seasons for paddy. During the earlier season seed is either broadcast in Jeth (early June) or is prepared in seedbeds and seedlings are transplanted in Ashad (early July) and harvested in Asoj (early October). This planting is called saro or bhadaiya. Seventy-five per cent of the paddy fields are planted at this time.

During the later season which is called sarihan, seed is either broadcast in the field or prepared in seedbed in Shrawan (early August) for transplanting a month later and is harvested in Mangsir (early December).

H. Farming

Most of the sowing is done by broadcasting seeds. Everybody is aware that transplanting of paddy seedlings by hand produces at least 40% more yield than it would by broadcasting paddy, but they say that transplanting is not practical in a dry field. They do transplant in the small area of wet field near the village. They use bullocks for ploughing their fields. One pair of bullocks ploughs up 5 kattha ($1/4$ bigha) of land in work-day. The wage is $1/4$ maund of paddy which was worth 6 rupees at the time. They also calculate that 1 pair of bullocks is sufficient to cultivate 5 bighas of land through the year, if worked full time. A few people work the soil by hand with a hoe because this digs more deeply into the soil, but this is a very slow process.

I. Cattle

Padipur people keep buffaloes for milk, cows for breeding of plough bullocks, and goats for meat. (See Table XII). The economic importance of the bullocks is so great that the villagers never milk their milch cow if she has a male calf. But if the cow has a she-calf, they take milk without regard for the calf and sometimes even let her starve.

J. Agricultural Calendar through the year

Agricultural activities through the year can be shown in the following agricultural calendar of the village:

Magh (Jan-Feb)

Sarihan paddyfields are either ploughed three or four times by bullock or dug up by hand once.

Falgun (Feb-Mar)

Harvesting of various pulses - masuro, gram, peas, kheshari and oil seeds, farsye and alas are harvested.

Chait (Mar-Apr)

Harvesting of pulses continues in some fields and the other fields are ploughed.

Baisakh (Apr-May)

Wheat is harvested and fields are ploughed.

Jeth (May-June)

Paddy (saro) seed beds are prepared for transplanting later in some areas and in others (dry fields) the seed is broadcast.

Ashar (June-July)

Transplanting in some fields and weeding in others where transplanting of bhadaiya (saro) paddy is already finished.

Shawan (July-August)

Seed beds of sarihan paddy are prepared and the seed is broadcast in drier fields. Weeding of earlier sown saro is done.

Bhadau (August-Sept)

Weeding of both saro and sarihan paddy. (saro needs three weedings and sarihan, only two).

Asoj (Sept-Oct)

Saro paddy is harvested and threshed. Fields are ploughed. Kheshari (a variety of pulse) is broadcast in sarihan paddy field for a double crop.

Kattik (Oct.-Nov)

Various pulses, e.g., fram, musooro; and barley, wheat, sarsyoo and mustard are broadcast in the field in which saro (bhadaiya) paddy has been harvested. (alas or mustard is mixed with wheat or grain before broadcasting for double cropping).

Mangsir (Nov-Dec)

Cutting and threshing of sarihan paddy is done during this month.

Push (Dec-Jan)

Harvesting of sarihan paddy, particularly threshing, is continued leisurely throughout this month.

K. Seed Selection.

Seed of almost any cereal is set aside immediately after harvest. For example, after an offering to the god, paddy seed is the first thing to be set aside from the freshly threshed paddy heaped on the threshing ground. Fifty per-cent more fresh seed than the actual quantity needed is taken because it is believed that there has to be a margin (sukhawan) of fifty per cent for further drying, sifting and winnowing. In the case of tenant cultivated land, it is usually the owner of the land who provides seed for every planting and who collects it before every sharing of the yield.

L. Water

Most Padipur farm land is not irrigated, and in these dry lands the seed is sown broadcast. There are, however, a few low-lying fields in the area whose soil is of better quality and which are watered by small natural springs. In these areas paddy is transplanted and the yields are considerably higher.

M. Fertilizer

Some local fertilizer such as cattle manure is used. Chemical fertilizer is used only in vegetable gardens. The people believe that chemical fertilizer is not effective in dry areas.

N. Cash Crops

The most important cash crop which the people have been traditionally producing is ganja (hemp). Ganja is in great demand in India, but because of the prohibitive taxes recently imposed by HMG, people are giving up its cultivation. There are two important reasons for discouraging ganja cultivation. Because of its narcotic effects, it is prohibited by the government of India and the entire trade is carried on by smuggling. The attitude of HMG on the sale of ganja differs from that of India as there are no restrictions on its sale in the open market in Nepal, but it may be that HMG felt that it could no longer ignore the problem of smuggling.² The other and probably more immediately important reason for discouraging ganja cultivation is that HMG believed the action would encourage sugar cane growing more than any other cash crop.

Actually sugar cane growing has declined considerably during the past year for several reasons, both economic and cultural. For a few years, with the encouragement of the sugar factories in the area, people did grow sugar cane for their cash income. But when they calculated the net income from cane cultivation and compared it with the calculated income from paddy or ganja, the result, in proportion to the amount of investment both of labor and materials, was in favor of paddy and ganja. With ganja the farmers receive a very high income from crops grown on a very small area with intensive work and it is easier to watch and control a relatively small area. Even after paying a rather high tax to the government, they can still make a worthwhile cash profit.

Another reason for the decline in sugar cane cultivation is that its production is somewhat experimental and involves an element of risk. Since most people in the area are very conservative, not only in their social customs and attitudes, but also in agricultural practices, any adventure, experiment, or risk-taking is rather rare. Paddy cultivation is safe because

the method of cultivation is well known and paddy market prices are regular and stable. So paddy gets the top priority and sugar cane growing during the past year has declined.

The proportionate areas of cultivation under these three crops were as follows:

Total land cultivated	100.0%	316.B	10 K
Under paddy cultivation	95.3%	301 B	12 K
Under sugar cane cultivation	4.4%	14 B	
Under ganja (hemp) cultivation	0.3%		18 K

Unless the sugar factories do something to reverse the trend, cane growing will be completely abandoned by the people in the area.

III. ATTITUDES

The people of Padipur, with the exception of a few Muslims, are orthodox Hindus, with traditional beliefs, ideals, and ways of living. The village as a whole gives the impression of being very rigid and conservative. People do not want to change their age-old habits, attitudes, beliefs and ways of life. They are always suspicious of new people and new ideas. Their world seems to be defined in concentric circles with their own family at the center of it. Beyond their families, they have the caste and kin group scattered in the surrounding villages within or outside the districts, often across the Indian boundary. But that is more or less their known world. Anything beyond these villages is very vague and blurred. For example, the question often raised by some intellectuals about the political loyalty of these people does not interest them in the least. They are aware of their being Nepali, but at the same time they have a very close social, cultural and economic interdependence with the Indian communities of the adjacent districts. This is their reality which they accept as natural. Any other question beyond this and its implications is not the concern or within the scope of the common people's understanding.

A. Religious Beliefs

Generally speaking the people are more disposed than their hill counterparts to adhere to the old religious traditions, ritual purity, religious ceremonies and a number of other formalities.

1. Social and Economic Effects. A few cases listed below will explain how religious beliefs affect everyday lives in the social and economic fields.

Case I - A group of villagers had organized a recitation of Shrimad Bhagavad, the Hindu religious story, for the general well-being of the villagers every evening for one week. A Brahman priest, originally an Indian, but presently a resident of neighboring village was commissioned to recite the text. Every afternoon as soon as he came to the place a group of four or five married women washed his feet with water, a small portion of which they drank and also sprinkled over their body for ritual purification. When asked the reason for this ritual the men present explained (the women were too embarrassed or shy to say anything) that it is a tradition and duty to drink the Charanamrit (holy water from sacred feet). This would relieve them of all the sins they had committed in "ignorance".

Case II - During the recital and interpretation of Shrimad Bhagavad there were usually about 30-35 listeners sitting around the small raised dais where the Brahman priest sat with his long looseleaf book. But there was always group of 3 or 4 people sitting aside on the floor in the open. They were physically separate from the rest of the listeners who sat together sharing a common straw mat or two. This small group in isolation were low caste untouchables of the village. They would profane the entire ceremony if they happened to come into physical contact even with the edge of the mat.

Case III - One day the same Brahman priest, who is also regarded as a very learned man, was found talking casually to a group of villagers in the street while I was on my usual round of the village. He was saying that the present age, according to the religious tenets, recorded by the wise men of the ancient days, is the latter part of Kaliyug. This, according to the Brahman priest, represented the worst of all ages just before the final destruction of the world. Therefore it is natural to have bad days with problems, difficulties, diseases, poverty, ill feelings, quarrels and so on. When interrupted and asked to give some more evidences of the bad age, he continued to explain that during this Kaliyug, it is said that the gods will disappear from the earth. There will be no regard for caste differences, no consideration of high and low, the junior people will argue with their seniors. Wives will not respect their husbands. There will be famine, drought, flood and epidemics. Brahmins will lose respect and the kings will tax their people more and more. When asked to give an example of the King's taxation, he cited the increased land tax compulsory savings under Land Reform.

2. Temples and Shrines. The village has a group of shrines at one end. Four different deities are represented here. The most dreaded and most imposing one of the four is "Bhagauti" (or

Bhagavati). Bhagauti, when angry, brings all kinds of diseases including epidemics of cholera and smallpox. So people are very particular about worshipping this goddess. She has a small brick temple.

Barham and Durga also have slightly smaller temples. They are considered protectors and well-wishers of the village. People do not have to be afraid of them. They are benevolent gods.

The fourth shrine stands in the open under a big banyan tree. This is called "Jat Jatin" and is symbolized by an old worn wooden plough half buried on the ground. This particular deity, when pleased, brings in good harvests. So people worship him with all sincerity and enthusiasm. All of these gods are worshipped and offered food by individual families on all important occasions, feasts, festivals, etc. "Jat Jatin" is specially worshipped in the month of Shawan (July-August) for better crops. Other gods also have their special days on which they are worshipped. But since all of these shrines are together in a cluster, in actual practice all four are worshipped on all occasions.

3. Religious Festivals. All religious festivals are observed according to a lunar calendar.

- A. Jiutiya. This falls in Aswin (Sept-Oct). Married women prepare the best food, wash themselves clean, wear clean clothes and offer the food to the dead ancestors of the family early in the morning.
- B. Dashera is celebrated during October. In Kathmandu Valley and in the hills it is known as Dashain. This is an occasion for feasting, merrymaking, wearing new clothes and offering animal sacrifices to Bhagauti and Durga.
- C. Diwali. The festival of lights is observed in November. Women clean, whitewash and put various designs on the walls of their houses. They worship the cow, dog, bullock, and Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. The women, on the morning of the last day of the festival, call all the male members of the family bad names. While completing certain other rituals, they even kill their husbands and sons symbolically before they bring them back to life again. This is done for the longevity of the manfolk in the family.
- D. Chhath is also observed in November. This is an occasion for fasting and worshipping the sun. The observers must wear "clean clothes" on the body and have pure thoughts in mind." This is believed to bring good health, good luck, and prosperity and to protect children against disease and other evils. The slightest negligence on the part of the observers brings bad luck and other punishment. One woman of the

village was punished with leprosy because she had kicked the supplies which her husband had just brought from the bazaar as she was angry with him.

There are also a number of religious fairs and festivals observed at the temple sites in the surrounding area in which people from several villages come together to participate. The basic idea and purpose is general welfare, prosperity and entertainment.

The giving of gifts, alms and charity to Brahmans, beggars and other needy people is also considered a desirable thing to do. The difference between an offering to gods and goddesses, and to people is that the gods and goddesses are supposed to produce immediate benefits in a very subtle way, while gifts and charity to human beings are considered insurance for the next life.

At the time of the harvest when the heap of freshly threshed paddy is ready to be weighed and divided, as may be necessary, about a seer of the grain is taken from the top of the heap and offered to the god by setting it aside on the clean floor. After a while, a Brahman priest of the cultivating family comes in and collects it. This way, they fulfill both the purpose of appeasing the god who is expected to make the paddy weigh the maximum amount possible and of making a gift of the grain to the Brahman which ensures a good return of food for the individuals of the family during the next life.

B. Economic Development

The majority of the people are indifferent and apathetic towards any kind of planned scheme or development project. This is not to say that they do not wish for a better life or will not work harder for betterment. But their way of thinking, which is not at all systematic, reasoned or scientific in the modern sense of the term, makes them accept familiar things as they are without question. The following cases will give some idea of their attitude towards planning or working for an improved life.

Case I - During our discussion with a group of people about the possibilities of increasing agricultural output, Hari Dev Sah Knau (age approximately 30) explained in a dramatic way that during the previous year he had tried to experiment with the new chemical fertilizer in his field. He worked harder than usual and was happy to see his field look better and more promising than the adjacent field belonging to somebody else. But at the time of harvest most of the grains in his field were hollow while his neighbor's field gave a good return. Thus, having wasted his increased investment both in money and work, he was convinced that it is luck and the will of the gods alone that helps people, but not hard work or ambition.

Case II - Madbo Singh Raut, another man (approximately 35 years of age) present in the group, picked up the conversation and gave a slightly different story to the same effect. He said that his father was a man of some prestige and his family was self-sufficient. At the time of marriage negotiations several girls of similar background, and some of them with considerable dowries both in movable and immovable properties had been offered to him. But alas! He was finally married to a woman without physical beauty, financial means or social background. This was a sad case; but since it is the gods who control peoples' destinies there was no use complaining or being unhappy over it.

The impression one gathered from listening to their conversation was that it is the gods alone who can help people. If the gods are angry, they will destroy even a very good crop by sending hailstones.

C. Some Measures Taken in the Past for Development or for Protective Purposes

In the old days, people never took measures with actual economic development in mind. They did take measures for either protective or religious purposes, or sometime for convenience of administration.

1. The first project, within living memory of the villagers, ever to have been undertaken by the village was under the leadership and responsibility of the senior Mr. Shah, the original Birta owner in the year 1925. It was a dike built along the neighboring river in order to divert it away from the village. They say that at that time the river threatened to wash away the entire village along with its cultivated fields. So it was very necessary to protect the village from being completely eroded away. Mr. Shah spent Rs. 1,100 on timber, bricks, cement etc., out of his own pocket. Of course, things were very much cheaper than. It would have cost at least ten times that amount today. Mr. Shah collected approximately Rs. 2,000 a year from the revenue of the village, so he had a direct interest in taking the initiative at the time. The village give him unanimous support in the task.

2. On another occasion, the village people united under the same man's leadership to arrest a gang of dacoits. The woman leader of a group of about thirty dacoits had absolutely terrorized not only the village people in the area, but also the government offices. She used to attack the surrounding villages during broad daylight from a neighboring village which was her home. But one day, Mr. Shah organized a group of about 60 men from the village. With eight guns and 14 elephants they closed in on her while her gang was plundering the village. She was then put in jail, much to everybody's relief.

3. In 1956 under the Tribhuvan Village Development Scheme a Congress party member organized the village to dig a mile long irrigation canal into the village land. He had received a Rs. 10,000 grant in aid from the District Development Office for this purpose. People harvested a much better crop that year, but silting and sliding damaged the canal soon after. Since then, no one has taken any initiative in repairing it, even though everybody is aware that the canal, if repaired, would irrigate the fields to the benefit of all the crops. With the increasing rift between the two rival groups in the village there is slight chance of the canal's maintenance ever being undertaken.

There are also two wells and two pumps being used for the drinking water supply of the village today which were partly financed by the District Development fund at about the same time as the canal. But today, no one thinks of these as examples of village cooperation and initiative. There are only a few individuals, each of whom is anxious to relate the story as to how his initiative and skills alone brought about this achievement.

4. In 1958 under the Village Development activities a group of villagers organized themselves and established a cooperative society. The received Rs. 1,600 from their District Cooperative Bank and they were able to enroll a membership of 21 people from the village. The Society bought and sold improved paddy seeds, wheat seeds, and chemical fertilizer. They also loaned some money out. But the Society gradually declined for lack of enthusiasm and interest on the part of the people, and within two years the Society was totally defunct. There are still a few individuals in the village who owe a total of a few hundred rupees to the society. But no one talks about it any more.

D. Education

On the whole the people of Padipur are not involved in and are very indifferent towards education. There is one Government supported free primary school in the village and a permanent resident teacher. This teacher comes from a village 7-8 miles away from Padipur. He visits his family in his own village only during weekends and other holidays. During the week days he is theoretically available to help adults or children with their education. In reality most of the evenings and mornings he is busy preparing his meals and attending to other domestic chores. Being a Brahman by caste, he cannot eat food prepared by anyone else in the village.

There are only 48 children in all five grades of the single classroom school. Only one of them is a girl, the granddaughter of a very wealthy man.

The total number of literate people including the children at school is 82 or 10.2% of the total population.

The following chart will give some idea of the potential school population and at the same time of the life expectancy of the people in general.

Children below	5 years of age	121	15%
Children between	6-16 years of age	184	22.9%
People between	17-40 years of age	320	39.8%
People between	41-60 years of age	155	19.2%
Over	60 years of age	<u>25</u>	3.1%
		805	

Learning and teaching in this school is perfunctory. Children sit in a line on the floor with their backs against the wall of the building reading something aloud in unison. They are either trying to learn something by heart or they are simply marking time with their fellow students while the teacher sits in a chair behind his desk, sometimes dozing. Sometimes he reads the Ramayana, the holy text, or occasionally points to an individual child who is teasing and tickling the child next to him instead of droning out the lesson.

There are two older boys of the village who attend a high school every day at District Headquarters located about two miles away, but education does not seem to have altered their outlook on life. Their attitudes and behavior are no different from those of the illiterate boys of their age group in the village. They expect to be "employed by the Government" when their study is "completed." There are three other people who have had a high school education and are now low-level employees of the Government; one of them is a veterinary compounder.

My suggestion to expand the existing primary school by adding another teacher, extending the building and bringing in the majority of the school age children was met with a total lack of interest not only by most of the villagers, but even by the "educated" people including the teacher himself who was indifferent to the idea.

Getting educated is learning certain things by rote and being able to reproduce them at the time of an examination. It results in a certificate and the certificate is an instrument for getting employment. No one expects an educated person to have "ideas." Almost everybody in the village vaguely feels that this education is a good thing. They are not able to tell how and why it is good except that it possibly leads to "government employment." Government employment generally has prestige value. The teacher himself believes this is true. The teaching profession is only considered to be quasi-governmental employment and the prestige generally associated with "government employment"

does not apply to teachers. Furthermore, in this particular case the teacher is a very quiet and modest person. Aggressiveness and a domineering personality seem to be the most important qualities which the people respect.

The little education the villagers have received so far does not seem to have given them any self-confidence. The following cases are illustrative:

Case I - During our stay in the village, preparations were being made for the election of the Pradhan Panch. A clerk from the Zilla Panchayat office was assigned to the village for three days to check the voter list, to announce the opening and closing dates for filing nomination papers, and to attend to a number of other necessary formalities. This clerk apparently felt that the villagers did not hold him in sufficient awe and he was accordingly irked. At the end of a few days he completed a number of notices and stuck them on the wall of one of the private granaries in the middle of the village. I happened to pass by the place soon after he had left the village. There was a group of people standing around and looking at the notices as if they were reading them. Upon inquiry however, I found that none of them had been able to read the notices. Then I went closer to the wall and tried to read for them. I could not decipher a single word as the clerk's handwriting was so poor. None of the villagers seemed to take it seriously.

Case II - About ten years ago, so the people told us, they were having a caste panchayat (meeting) of all the Kanus of the village. A few caste members from neighboring villages also participated, among whom was a young Kanu caste man from the next village. Since he had been to school in India he wore Western pants and shirts. He looked very different and conspicuous among the people who were dressed in dhotis and Indian style shirts. The jeers of the group forced him to leave; to be educated was acceptable, but to wear different dress was impertinent.

E. Government Officials, Zilla Panchayat and Gaun Panchayat

As far as the village people are concerned the Government is nothing more or less than the "Police". The Government has the power and authority which it seems to use very indiscriminately. It never looks after the local people or its welfare. Now-a-days, there is some talk by some politically oriented people about the idea of helping people; but the villagers think that this is all very selfishly designed for the politician's own benefit. These sorts of feelings characterize the basic attitude towards Government at any level. Occasionally some individuals do approach the "Government", as represented by an official either in the village

or at the District Headquarters. They complain about some injustice. The complainant does not necessarily expect justice every time, but at least he hopes for vengeance upon his enemy.

A summary of a few incidents relating to individuals who represented the "Government" at some level would be relevant here:

1. Mr. Shah and his Descendants. Within the known history of the village the first thing people remember is the Court of the Birta owner, Mr. Shah. This court started in the early 1920s in a small room with open varandahs at the entrance of the "Palace" in the village. This court (kachari) consisted of several clerks and some leading villagers representing their village with Mr. Shah at the head of it. This kachari was the village government as far as the people were concerned. It provided the leadership, gave justice, took care of the village welfare and collected the land revenue. Some of this was done through village consensus and some by outright imposition by Mr. Shah. In return for the "services" provided, the villagers had to serve the "palace" free of cost. Some eight or ten adults had to guard the kachari and the palace at night. This was done by the whole village population in rotation. Anyone failing to report at night had to pay a fine, in cash, worth a day's wage. People were often physically punished for an offence. This continued for over thirty years until after the death of Mr. Shah. His two sons took over the practice. Upon the death of both of the sons, the widow of the younger son took over the responsibility with some assistance from the village during the 1950's. By this time there was a change in the Central Government. The Rana regime was overthrown. The Shah family not only lost its right over the revenue of ten villages, but also lost the right of freedom from tax on its own 25 bighas of land. This made all the difference to their status in the village.

Meanwhile, with the growing spirit of freedom throughout the country, some ambitious members of the village were trying to establish their leadership. An old-time ally of the Shah family, Mr. Sahu, tried to break away from the widow's group and become an independent leader on his own. Mrs. Shah, however, succeeded in fabricating a case against this man of independent spirit who had already won some support in the village. She put him in jail for some time on a charge of theft. The rivalry between the two wealthy families of the village also was intensified during the period. Everybody took sides. The leadership was disputed as the influence of the old and established family declined. The village was divided. Thus everything drifted towards utter confusion in the late fifties.

The vacuum left by the decline of the Shahs seems gradually (in the minds of the villagers) to have been replaced by the position of the Pradhan Panch. This is true despite the fact that the Gaun Panchayat, along with its Pradhan Panch, is not

active in any real sense. The villagers view Government positions in the light of the prestige involved, rather than by the function performed (or not performed). Certainly the position of the Pradhan Panch during the formation of the Gaun Panchayat in 1962 was viewed in this way. The increasing rivalry and competition between two groups made the Pradhan Panch's position even more important. Ram Raj Ahir was appointed as the acting Pradhan Panch by the Zilla Panchayat until elected in his own right for the position in December 1966, which has been described above under the "Election of Pradhan Panch". The Pradhan Panch found himself generously enough disposed to throw a big feast costing several hundred rupees upon his victory in the election.

2. Some Case Studies Illustrating the Attitude of the People Towards the Government or its Officials

Case I - A few years ago, villagers recollected, a Hakim (Chief Officer) of the District Revenue Office was riding past the village. At the end of the village, he stopped and asked a villager who happened to be cutting grass by the roadside at the time, to hold his horse for awhile. This villager refused to obey. Upon this, the rider got off his horse and kicked the villager, cursed him and went away. The villager and a few others were scared and didn't say a word.

Case II - At another time, during our stay in the village, several officials from the District Land Reform Office came to the village on a visit. They were responsible for Compulsory Savings which the village was having some difficulty in collecting. A meeting was called and was attended by some ten or twelve village elders including the Pradhan Panch and two of the Panchayat members. At this meeting the official, without asking many questions and without explaining anything, said in an angry tone that he would realize all the savings from everybody by using physical force if people hesitated any longer. Everybody remained silent. No one raised a single question.

F. Land Reform

Land Reform has been considered as one more imposition by the Government. The most important objectives of Land Reform (redistribution of the land by the imposition of a ceiling, tenancy rights, and easier credit) have been regarded by the villagers in a rather negative manner.

1. Redistribution of Land. The ceiling did not affect this village. A few families with larger holdings were able to circumvent it by dividing the land among their own relatives.

2. Tenancy Rights. Few tenants cultivating the absentee landowner's land registered their tenancy rights. Most did not see any advantage in offending the landowners and spoiling relationships by asserting their tenancy rights. These tenants consider themselves as being always at the mercy of the landowners of the area.

3. Credit. Compulsory Savings is regarded as an unnecessary burden. It is argued that the loan is much safer and more convenient if borrowed from the local landowners in spite of the higher percentage of interest. The Compulsory Savings Fund, being a government organization, is complicated to deal with. If the Government were able to organize itself in a manner whereby repayments of loans by the tiller were collected at the time of harvest, much less burden would result. Unfortunately this is generally not the case. The Land Reform Office does not decide upon collection policies until a considerable time after the harvest and collection of loans is often attempted during the season of scarcity when people find it difficult enough merely to maintain themselves. They say that the "Government," which in this case is the Compulsory Savings of the District Land Reform Office, threatens to punish or even imprison them if they fail to return the loan at the time the District Land Reform Office asks for repayment. Therefore it is very difficult to have any confidence in government loans.

NOTES

1/ The contents of the present paper was submitted as an official report to USAID/Kathmandu for the first time in January 1968, as the author was working as a Research Specialist with the agency at the time. Since that time the report has been listed in bibliographies and mentioned in footnotes. But being only a mimeographed report produced in a very limited number of copies, it was not available as a reference work for most people who wanted to make use of it. Many friends and acquaintances, both at home and abroad, approached the author to lend a copy or to advise them where to find it. This is what prompted me to seek a publication of the paper even though some of the facts mentioned in the paper must be a passé by now. The actual field work was conducted during November - December of 1966. Since the author has not been able to revisit the area for the past seven years, he does not know for sure as to what particular situation has changed and what has not. Therefore, it was decided to leave the present tense of the statements as they are.

If anyone wanted to revisit the area for a comparative study it would not be too hard to follow the discreet hints given in the report and recognize the village. But for other purposes, the author had given his word to the many friends in the village that he would not publish certain information including the location

and the name of their village. Pseudonyms are given both to the village and the individuals involved. However, the author hopes that the report still serves as a specimen study of a prototype village in the Central Terai. I wish to thank Dr. B.P. Upreti who helped me in gathering the data for this report.

2/ Ganja (or hashish) growing has since been completely banned by His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

APPENDIX

MEASUREMENT OF LAND & YIELD OF PADDY IN PADIPUR VILLAGE
FOR FUTURE REFERENCE & COMPARISON

Land Unit Used:

	1 Dhur	=	13 ft. 5 in.	x	13 ft. 5 in.
		=	53 ft. 8 in.	Perimeter	
		=	180 sq. ft.	1 sq. in	

1. First Class Land

Land Owner:	Mesrs Shah Dillibazar, Kathmandu (Land managed by a bailiff)
Site (Location):	Just outside and adjacent to the southeast corner of the old deserted palace compound.
Tenant Cultivator:	Khora Sah Kanu
Date Harvested:	3 December 1966
Date Threshed:	4 December 1966
Type of Paddy:	<u>Laji</u> (common in the area)
Total Yield:	4 seers (40 maunds per bigha)

2. Second Class Land

Land Owner:	Mesrs Shah Dillibazaar, Kathmandu (land managed by a bailiff)
Location:	About 33 yds. east of the village pond
Tenant Cultavotar:	Nathuni Sah Kanu
Date Harvested:	3 December 1966
Type of Paddy	<u>Laji</u> (common in the area)
Total Yield:	2 seers 3 chhatak (22 maunds per bigah)

3. Third Class Land

Land Owner:	Ram Agyan Teli
Tenant Cultivator:	Chandrika Sah Kanu
Location:	Southeast corner of village boundary
Date Harvested:	3 December 1966
Date Threshed:	4 December 1966
Type of Paddy:	Laji
Total Yield:	2 seers (20 maunds per bigha)

TABLE I

POPULATION DIVISION BY CASTE

Caste Names as "Term of Reference"	Term of Address	Caste Profession	No. of Households	Per Cent
1. Brahman	Pandit	Priest	4	2.6
2. Chhetri			3	1.9
3. Kanu	Sah, Ashu	Trade & Business	78	50.3
4. Ahir	Yadav, Raut	Milkmen	11	7.1
5. Dhanuk	Mahato		15	9.7
6. Hajam	Thakur	Barber	1	0.6
7. Lohar	Thakur	Blacksmith	1	0.6
8. Teli		Oil Pressing	13	8.4
9. Mussulman	Miya		13	8.4
10. Dhobi	Baitha	Washermen	10	6.5
11. Chamar		Scavenging	6	3.9

TABLE II

EXTENDED FAMILY GROUPS

<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Belonging to an Extended Group Consisting of</u>
68	43.9	6 to 7 families
35	22.6	4 to 5 families
30	19.3	did not have a group
20	12.9	2 to 3 families
2	1.3	absentee
155	100.0	

TABLE IIIFAMILY SIZE

<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>No. of Individuals within the families</u>
71	46.4	3 to 5 members
52	34.0	6 to 10 members
21	13.7	2 members
9	5.9	Over 10 members
153	100.0	

Note: 2 families not residing permanently in the village are not taken into consideration here.

TABLE IVFACTION

<u>Caste Group</u>	<u>No. of Families in</u>		<u>No. of Families in</u>
	<u>Faction A</u>	<u>Faction B</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
1. Brahman	1	-	3
2. Chhetri	1	-	2
3. Kanu	45	30	3
4. Ahir	7	4	-
5. Dhanuk	12	3	-
6. Hajam	1	-	-
7. Lohar	1	-	-
8. Teli	12	1	-
9. Mussalman	8	3	2
10. Dhobi	4	6	-
11. Chamar	6	-	-

TABLE V

CREDIT

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Families Lending Cash & Cereal Grain	8	5.2
Families Borrowing Cash	54	34.8
Families Borrowing Paddy	115	74.2
Families Self-Sufficient Without Having to Borrow	11	7.1
Families Too Poor and Low caste to be able to Borrow	21	13.5

TABLE VI

LAND CULTIVATED

	<u>Bigha</u>	<u>Kattha</u>	<u>Dhur</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Total Area of Land Cultivated	316	10	-	100.0
Land within Padipur Village Boundary	152	5	8	48.1
Land Outside Padipur Village Boundary	164	4	12	51.9

TABLE VII

TENANT & OWNER CULTIVATED

	<u>Bigha</u>	<u>Kattha</u>	<u>Dhur</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Total Land	316	10		100.0
Owner Cultivated Land	183	6		57.9
Rented or Tenant Cultivated	133	4		42.1

TABLE VIIIDISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INCOME

<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>P.C.</u>	<u>Amount (Mds.)</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
13	8.4	4333	65.3
31	20.0	1261	19.0
111	71.6	1042	15.7

TABLE IXLAND OWNERSHIP

<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>P.C.</u>	<u>Area of Land</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
111	71.6	31B 19K 7D	10.1
31	20.0	60B 2K 14D	19.0
9	5.8	122B 3K 7D	38.6
4	2.6	102B 4K 12D	32.3

TABLE XDIVISION OF LAND PER FAMILY

<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>P.C.</u>	<u>Size of Holding</u>
76	49.0	Below 1 bigha
33	21.3	No land
31	20.0	1 - 5 bigha
9	5.8	10 - 20 bigha
4	2.6	Above 20 bigha
2	1.3	5 - 10 bigha

TABLE IX

LAND UNDER DIFFERENT CROPS

	<u>Area</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Land Total	316B 10K	100.0
Paddy Cultivation	301B 12K	95.3
Sugar Cane	14B	4.4
<u>Ganja</u> (Marijuana)	18K	0.3

TABLE XII

CATTLE

<u>Total No. of</u>		<u>No. Per Family</u>
Bullocks	131	0.8
Buffalo	54	0.3
Cow	56	0.4
Goats	190	1.2
Total	431	2.8

TABLE XIII

HOUSE TYPES

	<u>No</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Brick	19	12.3
Tile Roofed	16	10.3
Thatched	120	77.4

TABLE XIVPOPULATION BY AGE

	<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Below 5 Years	121	15.0
6 - 16 years	184	22.9
16 - 40 years	320	39.8
41 - 60 years	155	19.2
Above 60	25	3.1
Total	805	100.0

TABLE XVPOPULATION BY SEX

	<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Male	406	50.4
Female	399	49.6
Total	805	100.0

TABLE XVIMISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS

	<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
No. of Literate	82	10.2
No. of School-Going Children	48	6.0
No. of Service Holders	8	1.0



the ankhu khola valley,

introduction

An introduction to a Multidisciplinary Research programme in Nepal.

The valley of the Ankhu Khola is situated between the Ganesh Himal range in the north, Tiru Danda in the east and the Abuthum Lekh in the west in the area to the northwest of Kathmandu. The Ankhu Khola flows 35 km. from its source to the place where it joins the Buri Gandaki. In this rather short distance, the river flows through several distinct ecological zones, near the settlements of several ethnic groups.

We first came upon the region during our survey of the Manaslu area (see: Manaslu, Hommes et milieux du Népal central, by J.F. Dobremez and C. Jest. Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1975) and found that the area was interesting both because of the multiplicity of ecological problems and its apparent remoteness in spite of its close proximity to Kathmandu.

We have been running a series of surveys in the area in the fields of geology, geomorphology (soil erosion, transformation of landscapes), zoology, botany, ecology and anthropology since 1974.

The following two articles are examples of work now in progress in this region and present two aspects of the research from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique being done in Nepal. Several other works of this type have been published in Objets et Mondes, Paris, Vol. XIV, 4, 1974 and we recommend them to your attention. The first of the two articles which follow in this volume is by Gerard Toffin, analysing the social structure of the people in this area along a north-south transect. The second, by Philippe Alirol discusses the ecological factors which constrain the cattle and sheep herders in the region.

Dr. Corneille Jest
Maître de recherche CNRS
Director, Research Team-Himalaya CNRS

the peoples of the upper ankhu khola valley¹

Gérard Toffin

The Ankhu Khola valley is located about 45 km. west of Kathmandu in the area bounded by the Trisuli valley to the east, the Buri Gandaki to the west, in the north by the great range of the Himalayas which forms Nepal's frontier with China, and in the south by the Mahabharat mountains which dominate the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Springing from the snowy slopes of Ganesh Himal, an impenetrable barrier which dominates the northern end of the valley, the Ankhu Khola flows in a southerly direction 35 km. where it joins the Buri-Gandaki slightly east of Gorkha. Although the valley is quite wide downstream, it becomes progressively narrower as one travels northward to the source. Above the village of Burāng, where the Kintang Khola joins the Ankhu Khola, the river flows between two extremely steep slopes. The northernmost part of the Ankhu Khola region, the area which is most densely inhabited, is formed by a series of small tributaries such as the Bhabil and the Bhaletang Khola each flowing through small valleys. All ecological zones, from tropical to alpine forest are included in its length (figure 2). Within a distance of 30 km. the altitude ranges from 800 to 7500m, a difference of about 6700m. Villages are located between 1400 and 2100m, while cultivation can be found up to 2500m.; above this line, the forest begins and higher still, at around 3700m there are alpine meadows.

One can reach the Ankhu Khola from the east by either of two routes: by climbing up from Jhārlāng and Burāng or by going over the Rupchet Pass (4000m), three days walk to the north-East of Trisuli. The valley route is used in the winter, while the pass is used during monsoon. The Ankhu Khola can be reached from the west as well, that is to say from the Buri Gandaki; first a 320m. pass must be crossed above Khading, followed by a descent into the Ghattya Khola valley towards Burāng.

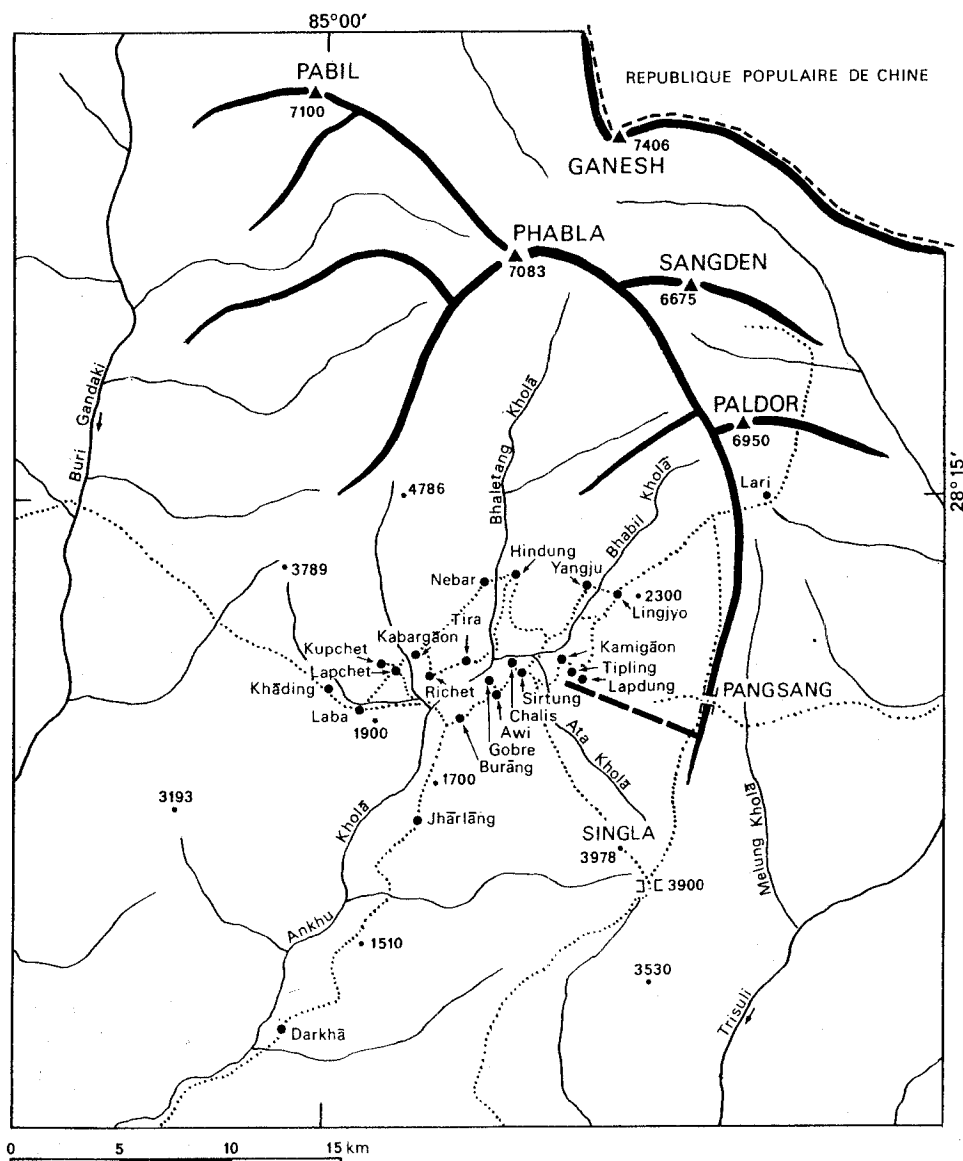
Settlement

According to the 1971 census, the total population of the Ankhu Khola valley is 16,914 distributed through four gaon panchayats² as follows: Sirtung (5140 inhabitants), Darkhā (4,384), Jhārlāng (4,013), and Lāba (3,777)³. Two of these panchayats, Sirtung and Lāba with a total of 8517 inhabitants make up the upper part of the valley.

According to this census, Dhading District or Dhading Jillā, in which the Ankhu Khola is situated, contains 189,616 persons who speak Nepali as a mother tongue, 36,884 Tamang, 8,028 Gurung and 921 Newar. In the upper Ankhu Khola, the order of ethno-linguistic groups is different: the bulk of the population is Tamang, more than 70% according to our estimate, the Gurung are

the second largest with 20%. After this, there are 47 households of Kāmī, the Indo-Nepali blacksmith caste and the Newar (15 households). A small community of Damai (musician-tailors) live downstream in the village of Darkhā, but this locality is outside our field of study. The population is distributed equally on either side of the valley, slightly larger in the east.

FIG: 1. The upper and middle Ahkhu Khola valley. The Tipling-Pangsang transect shown in Figure 2. is marked on the map. At Lari, north of Pangsang, some Indians on the payroll of a Nepalese company are mining lead and copper deposits. Several Tamang from the upper valley are employed in extracting the minerals and in portering equipment from Trisuli as well.



The lingua franca in the upper valley is Tamang, a Tibeto-Burmese language, not Nepali. This is essentially because of the small number of people of Indo-Nepali origin and the extremely low literacy rate-6% according to the 1971 census. The Newar, Kami, and sometimes the Gurung have to communicate with the Tamang in this language.

It is still too early to write a history of the settlement of the Ankhu Khola region. We were unable to find any documents on this region at the time of our visit; at present we have only the legends of the inhabitants to rely on in proposing hypotheses. In all likelihood, the earliest residents of the valley are the Tamang. According to tradition, this ethnic group originated in the south of Tibet: Tibetan chronicles mention that the Tamang made up part of the cavalry regiments of the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo, when he invaded Nepal in the seventh century⁴, the Tamang didn't return, but settled in Nepal and India. One legend, collected in Sirtung, tells of the arrival of the Tamang in the Ankhu Khola fifteen generations ago via Kyirong, northwest of the valley. By this route, four baje (ancestors or respected persons) reached Pangsang, the pass which provides access to the eastern part of the valley from Trisuli. In order to divide the valley which lay before them, these four baje resorted to a series of tests: the first would allow the winner to establish a village where rose from the valley a building with a gilded dome (gajur-Nep.). The winner, it was decided, would be the man who could split a rock in two with his knife (khukuri-Nep.)⁵ The first three broke their blades on the stone, but the fourth, called Miga, succeeded in splitting the rock. Today, a split rock still can be seen at Pangsang testifying to this exploit. So Miga settled in the area around the gajur, which was called Sitajeth and founded the first village of the Ankhu Khola: Sirtung. The other three walked around the valley and competed for the rest of the land by means of other tests: Pading founded Jhārlāng; Xlarke: Lāba; and Bali: Tipling⁶. According to another legend collected in Sirtung, it is said that these four villages were governed by kings (rāja-Nep.), ten generations ago. Dardo reigned in Sirtung, Yanche in Jhārlāng, Gili in Lāba and Khuruwa in Tipling.

Before the conquest and unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah in the second half of the eighteenth century, the western part of Nepal was divided into small independant principalities whose territories did not extend beyond the limits of a valley or the walls of a settlement. Isolated from each other by the geographic conditions peculiar to the hills of Nepal, these principalities lived in closed self-sufficiency when they were not warring with their neighbors. It was only after the unification of Nepal that these rājas which governed their little kingdoms were replaced by administrators directly attached to the central power. Although there is no documentary evidence, one supposes that identical events occurred on a smaller scale in the Ankhu

Khola region; the only remains from this earlier period are the old fortresses (darbār-Nep., ghothen-Tam.) in which their kings lived. These remains can be seen in Sirtung, Lāba and Jhārlāng; they were built of stone, generally on the top of a rocky eminence with difficult access.

According to local tradition, these kings were from the Ghale clan. Legends tell of how on the eve of a war between Khuruwa, king of Tipling and his father-in-law, Dardo, king of Sirtung, the latter was betrayed by his daughter and killed. To fix his successor, the Tamang met at Kāshīgaon on the Buri-Gandaki, and kidnapped a Ghale child to make him king of Sirtung. They reckoned that only the young boy who would sit on his cap (topi) so as not to get dirty would have princely qualities. In this way, the boy became king: he is known today as the Khunga Rāja. This legend seems to be the echo of an important political event: is this not a veiled way of recalling an invasion from the west or a change of dynasty? At least this explanation would have the merit of fitting in with the present situation, for to this day, Tamang do not consider the Ghale as real members of their ethnic group, they still maintain a sharp boundary between the groups; the Ghale live in separate quarters and have a certain pre-eminant status compared to the Tamang, in spite of the fact that the two groups speak the same language and share the same culture. A comparison between the clan and political structure of the Tamang and the Gurung, another ethnic group with a Tibeto-Burmese language living to the west of the Ankhu Khola, is equally striking and worth stressing; in these two groups there is the same association between one clan and the function of royalty, and between another clan and the function of an executive ministry. In both groups, the royal clan is called Ghale⁷ the ministerial clan of the Gurung is called Lamechane⁸ while that of the Tamang is called Thokra or Rambot⁹.

The Gurung have not been settled in the Ankhu Khola for a very long time. Here they are far from their place of origin between the Kali-Gandaki and the Marsyandi Rivers. Coming from the west, the Gurung established themselves in autonomous villages: Khāding, Lapchet and Tira on the west bank, and Chālīs on the east. A story we were told at Sirtung relates one episode of this migration: "When the Gurung arrived in the valley, they had neither field nor village. At first, they worked in the copper and iron mines, then they came to ask the Tamang of Sirtung for permission to found a village below theirs; the Tamang agreed. Then the pioneer Gurung asked the Tamang for land: the Tamang mukhiyā (head of a clan or village-Nep.) was reluctant but finally agreed to grant them some unused land equal in size to the skin of a buffalo. But the ingenious Gurung cut the buffalo skin up into this strips, so that they could cover a very large area." This story, without doubt legendary, shows something of the tension that must have occurred between the two ethnic groups at the time of the Gurung settlement in the valley.

The Newar and the Kāmī were the last to arrive in the Ankhu Khola. We shall confine ourselves here to the traditions of the origin of the Newar. They arrived in the Ankhu Khola eight generations ago at the invitation of the Sirtung Tamang who decided to confer on them the right to sell tobacco and cloth in the village: Dardan Singh, a Newar of the Bare¹⁰ caste was chosen. He came from Pulchowk, near Patan. The mukhiyā of Sirtung then went to find this man and make their request: as a guarantee they granted Dardan Singh and his descendants a monopoly of Tamang business in Sirtung; moreover to show their good faith, they agreed to supply a shroud (katro-Nep.) for the funeral rites of any deceased member of this Newar family. Dardan Singh accepted this proposition and settled soon after in Sirtung.

The Population Groups

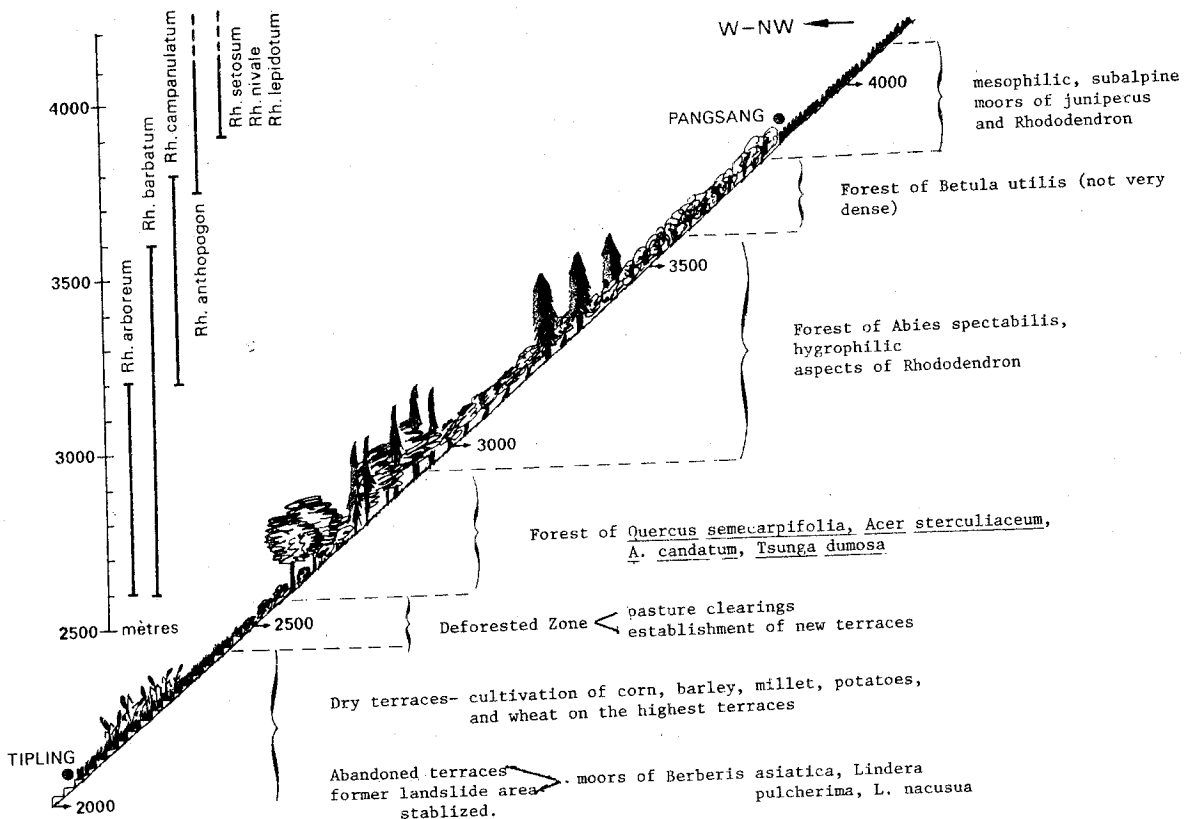
The Ankhu Khola is essentially a rural area: the Gurung and Tamang who form the majority of the population rely mostly on agriculture and animal husbandry; within these two groups there is little division of labor: not even a full-time specialist in any particular activity. The only artisans worth the name are the Kāmī, blacksmiths who supply the peasants of the valley with agricultural implements. The Newar are engaged principally in trade, although they will not refuse to cultivate lands on occasion. These four groups live in the same ecological zone, between 1800 and 2100 m. The population is not distributed according to altitude—all live within the same areas. They will now be discussed in order of their numerical importance.

The Tamang are divided into a certain number of clans called ri (Tam.). These are often referred to by the Nepali term thar or jāt instead of by the Tamang term. In 1974, the following clan names were noted in the upper Ankhu Khola: Dimdung, Ghale, Momba, Thokra (or Rambot), Gomca, Lama and Thaba. These clans are patrilineal and exogamous; a Tamang may not marry into his own clan, nor into one from which he can trace his descent, or one with which he shares a similar tutelary deity. Thus there is no intermarriage between the Dimdung and the Momba, the Gomca and the Rambot, nor between the Ghale, Lala and the Rambot. Terms of address usually reserved for consanguinal relations are used between these groups.¹¹

In Sirtung, each clan has its own divinity called kulgi xla, from the Nepali, kul which means descentance, group or lineage and from the Classical Tibetan, lha meaning divinity. The Ghale and Rambot have a goddess from the Newar pantheon: Mahākālī. She is represented by a stone which is kept beside the hearth inside each house. Twice a year, in the full-moon of Baisāk (April-May) and Jeth (May-June)¹², she is worshipped with offerings of barley beer and smoke of juniper to her altar; also, once every three years, in the full-moon of Baisāk, an effigy of Mahakali is made

of bamboo, carried around the village and burnt west of Sirtung at the border of the village land. The worship of the kulgi xla demonstrates some points common to all the Tamang clans of the valley: for example the tutelary deity of the Momba, Dalbo (or *dalbo mabon*) is also represented by a stone; she is kept in an alcove inside the house flanked by two other stones representing Nyabla and Ablung. These divine symbols are worshipped twice a year on the fullmoon of Baisāk and Bhadau (August-September).

FIG: 2 An ecological transect from Tipling to Pangsang, showing vegetation stages and the distribution of rhododendrons (prepared by B. Yon from fieldwork in 1974).



Clans are also associated with territorial protective deities which must be worshipped and which are collectively known as yülgi xla, from yül meaning country or territory¹³. In Situng, the yülgi xla are generally found on top of the mountains and hills surrounding the village. Ghale worship Brakar, Dimdung: Chembra, Gomca: Chimbala and the Momba worship Nyembu (in Sitajeth). Worship of the yülgi xla consist of long prayer recitations performed by specialists, the lamu; an altar is erected and torma in the image of the gods that are to be worshipped are made, then animals are sacrificed. The clans expect each territorial deity to protect the village from hail, hurricane, drought and sickness. The most important day of worship is in the full-moon of Baisāk; on this day, Ghale offer eggs to Brakar, Dimdung sacrifice a cock to Chembra and the Momba sacrifice a goat to Nyembu, the founding deity of the village who resides in Sitajeth in the middle of the settlement.

Clans are often spread out in the area according to an established order; in Sirtung, for example, one clan predominates in each quarter (mamca-Tam): Ghale and Rambot live in the northwest in Gompo, Dimdung in the northeast, in Barkap, Momba in the center, in Chyet, the Gomca in the south in Chuta, and in the east in Kharca; marriages are always arranged within the village or with neighboring villages. With a few exceptions, the upper Ankhu Khola is an area of complete endogamy; in Sirtung, we found that 5% of the marriages were with Hindung, 4% with Tipling, 6% with Burāng, and 1% with Lāba. The proportion of exogamous marriages beyond the limits of the upper Ankhu Khola were less than 1%.

Compared to the Tamang, the Gurung of the Ankhu Khola seem extremely "deculturés"; by settling in this valley, they lost their language and a large part of their cultural traditions. Here the Gurung speak only in Nepali, or in Tamang when they speak with that group; we never heard a single word of Gurung spoken in this group. Moreover, the influence of the numerically superior Tamang group is quite appreciable in all aspects of the Gurung's material and even cultural life. There are no significant differences between the agricultural practices of these two communities: they both cultivate the same crops on the same fields, with the same tools and according to the same agricultural calendar. The design of the Gurung house has been better able to resist the influences of local design; several of the original characteristics have been maintained: roofs are high and thatched and the walls are ochred. Here too, however, the influence of Tamang design has begun to creep in with shingle roofs and wicker work (bhakāri-Nep.) walls.

Like the Tamang, the Gurung of the Ankhu Khola are divided into exogamous clans called thar (Nep.); we counted the following four clans: Ghale, Lamechane, Lama and Migi; the first three clans belong to the chārjāt and used to occupy the functions of

kings, ministers (or royal officers) and priests respectively:¹⁴ today this differentiation has disappeared. The fourth thar is part of the sohrajāt, a grouping of clans with lower status than the former¹⁵. In principle, Migi may not intermarry with the three chārjāt clans.

For celebrating religious ceremonies, the Gurung have their own priests: lama from the Lamechane or Lama clans living in Khāding. Tamang lamas are never used; on the other hand, a Tamang shaman, bombo, may be invited to officiate in a Gurung house if there is a serious illness in the family.

A third group, the Kāmī live in small hamlets slightly apart from the Gurung and Tamang villages in the valley. In 1974, we counted 47 Kami households spread almost equally along the east bank (with 27 houses) and the west bank (with 20 houses). The Kami forge all the farming implements used by the Tamang and the Gurung, as well as a large part of the jewellery worn by both the men and the women; they make and repair kitchen utensils such as pots and pans, fire tripods, tools and musical instruments (knives, chains, jew's harps etc.). They are indispensable to the farmers of this region for the production of all these objects. Iron was once mined by the Gurungs, as mentioned in the legend above; now it is purchased in Trisuli or Kathmandu. In May, 1974 it cost Rs. 12 per dhārni (2.27 kg.) in Trisuli and from Rs. 9-10 per dhārni in Kathmandu; it is brought to the Ankhu Khola valley by Kāmī, Gurung or Tamang porters. Charcoal is prepared by the Kāmī themselves from oaks felled in the forest above the villages.

The blacksmiths have neither fields nor herds to speak of, they breed only some poultry and pigs. They must rely entirely on what they are paid by the farmers in cash or kind to meet their needs; this system of payment, not unusual in Nepal and close to the jājmani system in India, is called bāli (Nep.): every year, the client must provide his blacksmith with a basket full of the three largest annual cereal crops: corn in August, millet in October, barley or wheat from April to May. The blacksmith also gets from 4 mānās to 1 pāthi of potatoes at the beginning of monsoon. When the harvest is over, it is the Kāmī himself, that will claim his due from his clients in certain cases, otherwise, the Tamang or Gurung client carries the bāli directly to the smith.

It is difficult to calculate the exact volume of grain that the Kāmī gets every year; it varies according to a large number of factors, all of which are hard to take into account. As a rule, when the client supplies the iron, the Kāmī receives the equivalent of one basketful in volume called dhumche; if the client does not supply the raw materials, he must give the equivalent of a basketful called a daka, which is slightly bigger than the former. By and large, the bāli pays only for the repair and maintenance of agricultural implements and kitchen utensils;

every time the client wants something new to be made, he must pay an additional amount for the workmanship, (kāmako-Nep.). In May 1974, the kāmako for a knife (khukuri), reached Rs. 15; the total price of the tool was fixed at about Rs. 30 and the amount of iron necessary to make it was about one dhārni. The price of making a small hoe, komo, was Rs. 3; the total price of the tool was fixed at Rs. 5 or 6 and the amount of iron needed to make it was three pau ($1\frac{1}{4}$ dhārni). Finally, we should note that the volume of grain in a basket is proportional to the number of utensils made in a year. These few examples suffice to show that while the Kāmī are paid essentially in grain, there exists a parallel system of cash payment as well; rates of conversion allow interchange from one system to the other.

The Newar of the upper Ankhu Khola valley form a small community of about 15 houses; most live in Sirtung village, with some others in Gurung settlements such as Chālis and Khāding. This ethnic minority has been able to preserve its language and cultural traditions: Newari is spoken in the family and the parents take care to see that the children know how to speak it. The Newars of Sirtung also continue to celebrate the festivals of the Kathmandu valley: during August, religious music is played every evening and one person, incarnating the demon, Lakhe, dances in the village. The Newar, in fact, have never been integrated into the Tamang milieu; they go regularly to Trisuli or to the Kathmandu valley on business or to visit relatives. In contrast to the Tamang and the Gurung, they do not intermarry within the Ankhu Khola valley, but go most often to Trisuli to search for their wives; marriage with close relatives is forbidden and there must be a gap of a few generations (from three to five). This generally enlarges the geographical area of alliances. The Newar, therefore, have deliberately turned outwards; their matrimonial and commercial ties have permitted them to keep close contact with the Kathmandu valley and to preserve an autonomous culture.

The Newar of the Ankhu Khola, as we have seen, make their living by business: they sell cigarettes, tobacco, matches and cloth to Tamang and Gurung farmers. There are only two Newar shops (pasal) in the upper valley, one in Sirtung, the other in Khāding. But the other families in this group also have stocks of cigarettes and cloth in their houses which they sell to the peasants. Moreover, the Newar have acquired fields; most cultivate their land themselves without employing wage laborers, but some are so poor that they have to work for Tamang families to survive. On the whole, a Newar family does not own any more cultivated land than a Gurung or Tamang family.

In Sirtung, the Newar also work at some other occupations: first of all, they act as tailors; there are those who cut and make childrens' and girls' blouses or the caps worn by breast-feeding infants. They also cut hair for the Tamang in exchange for a few paisa. Through these small services, the Newar are to

some extent integrated into the village. Similarly there is some solidarity in the matter of religious ceremonies: at Tamang funerals, the Newar must give the parents of the deceased five pieces of different colored cloth to be wrapped around the corpse; they must also provide a canopy (chaṭṭa) made of multi-colored material, which is placed above the body.

Hierarchy and Caste

This presentation of the population groups now leads us to a description of the hierarchy within the social groups of the valley, a difficult task since several value systems coexist which are not always compatible.

As it is, no particular words exist in Tamang or in Gurung to express the concepts of purity or impurity, the basis of the caste system. When these ideas must be expressed, both languages use Nepali words such as sudha, asudha, chokho or jutho. The idea of caste is basically foreign to the Tamang and to the Gurung: everything seems to indicate that this concept has been acquired recently under the influence of the Newar and the Kāmī, who settled in the valley less than ten generations ago. Among the Tamang clans, and to a lesser extent, among the Gurung clans, there is no hierarchy based on the caste system. We did not meet with a division of the Tamang society into bāra jāt and athāra jāt castes, as mentioned by Fürer-Haimendorf in 1956 for the districts east of Kathmandu¹⁷. Hierarchy for the Tamang is essentially different: there once seems to have been a division of "tribal" society into several clans, each of which was associated with a particular function in this region of Nepal. We have already noted that among the Tamang of the Ankhu Khola royalty was monopolized by the Ghale and the ministers by the Rambot; the priestly function was invested in a third clan, the Lama, who practice it still to this day. The higher rank occupied by the Ghale, and to some extent the Rambot originates from this social division by function. Today, these two clans still live in the same quarters of Sirtung, just below the old darbār. They are not distinguished in any other way from the other Tamang clans; Ghale marry the Dimdong and the Momba, and they accept food cooked by their affines. No concept of purity or impurity intervenes in these relationships. The Ghale's ban on eating beef, buffalo and chicken, and the Rambot's ban on chicken expresses the traditional hierarchy in modern Hindu terms.

These status differences correspond to traditional forms of authority still basic to their group. When the Tamang describe their relations with the other groups in the valley (the Newar and the Kāmī for example), they use Hindu terminology; for them, the vocabulary and ideology of caste are the best means of being integrated into the Nepali nation. Ethnic groups are called jāt; sometimes the Tamang use this word even to describe their clans.

The hierarchy between social groups, ethnic groups or caste is expressed in terms of purity and impurity; according to these concepts, the population of the Ankhu Khola is divided into three pure castes, pāni chalne jāt (Nep.), the Newar, Gurung and Tamang, and one impure caste, pāni na chalne jāt (Nep.), the Kāmī. The pure castes do not wear the sacred thread: they drink alcohol and so are called matwāli.

At the top of the hierarchy stands the group smallest in terms of number, the Newar. In the absence of Brahmins and Chhetris, this group occupies the highest place among the population groups of the Ankhu Khola. Because they occupy the highest rank, the Newar are most concerned about caste rules; they claim to belong to the caste of their ancestor Dardan Singh, Bare, a high Buddhist caste in the Newar hierarchy. To preserve their status, they are obliged to observe strict matrimonial rules; in particular, they may not marry Gurung or Tamang. Such marriages are absolutely forbidden and during our inquiry we found no examples of such marriages. The Newar are equally strict in regard to rules about eating: they do not accept rice or even corn or barley porridge, dhido (Nep.), which is eaten every day in place of rice, if it is cooked by a Tamang or a Gurung. They are more flexible about other cooked foods, such as vegetables or potatoes; it is conceded that if the plate has not been salted, it is acceptable from a Tamang or a Gurung. This often happens when the Newar go to Trisuli accompanied by Tamang: at stopping places, the vegetable dish, tarkāri (Nep.) is always cooked in common; as long as it has not been salted, the Tamang may touch it, but once salt is added, it can be polluted, so the Newar must be served first. There is one other caste rule respected by the Newar: they will not smoke a waterpipe through the same mouthpiece, nāli (Nep.) as a Tamang or a Gurung. Also they will not allow strangers from their own caste to sit down next to the hearth of their homes.

There is theoretically no hierarchical difference between Tamang and Gurung. For the Tamang the position is clear: they consider themselves to be of equal status to the Gurung and find it normal for the latter to accept cooked food from them. The Gurung have more trouble admitting to this equality of status; some even go as far as to refuse rice cooked by Tamang. Between the two groups, inter-ethnic marriage is very rare. When it does occur, it is usually with a Gurung or a Tamang woman from outside the valley. The children of these unions automatically take on the status of the father, even when he eats food prepared by his wife. It can be said, therefore, that as far as commensal habits go, the Tamang and the Gurung are one. Gurung reticence can no doubt be explained by the fact that they are part of the "military tribes" from which the Indian and British armies recruit some of their soldiers. The prestige of being wage earners, jāgir (Nep.) and of being fluent in the national language, gives them a slight feeling of superiority.

The Kāmī are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. They live in isolated hamlets apart from the Tamang and Gurung settlements. They are impure, which is to say that water is not acceptable from them. Newar, Gurung and Tamang are all very strict in their relations with blacksmiths: none of these will accept any food cooked by a Kāmī. If a blacksmith accidentally touches any roasted corn or wheat, these foods become polluted and must be given to him. Under no circumstance may a Kāmī enter the house of a member of a pure caste, and when he goes to claim his bāli from a Tamang or Gurung client, he will stand humbly on the doorstep. To purify a vessel which has been touched by a blacksmith, the housewife pours a drop of water on his earring, which is usually made of gold, after which she sprinkles it on the jug. This ritual is called patiyā in Nepali and khruba in Tamang.¹⁷

FOOTNOTES

1/ This article appeared originally in Objects et Mondes, Tome xiv, fasc. 4 1974, pp 325-336 in a slightly different form. It was translated from the original French by Julian Wake and Andrew Manzardo.

2/ Nepali words are followed in the text by (Nep.) and Tamang words by (Tam.) For Tamang words we have used a slightly simplified version of the system of Taylor (D.), Everitt (F.), Tamang (F.) Tamang (K.B.), A Vocabulary of the Tamang Language, Kirtipur 1972.

3/ Cf 1971 Population Census of Nepal, Kathmandu, 1973, 1, pp. 5-30.

4/ On this subject, the book by Santabir Lama, Tambā Kaiten, Kathmandu, 2026 V.S. can be consulted as well as the account given by A.W. Macdonald, "The Tamang as seen by one of themselves" Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia, Kathmandu, 1975. pp. 129-167

5/ Another version, also collected in Sirtung tells how the person who reached the building with the gilded dome first would be king of this part of the valley. One cannot help but be struck by the analogy between this legend and the one recently written by R.K. Adhikari about the Dura, an ethnic group close to the Gurung: "It is also said in the days when the Ghale were the rulers in some parts of west Nepal, they used to hold stone-throw competition on the occasion of Dasain festival and the man who hurls the stone farthest of all should have been automatically chosen as king. So the stone-throw competition which is held as a sport even to-day might have somehow connected with the medieval traditional method of the Ghale used for choosing their king." ("The Duras," Nepal Digest, vol 2 no. 11, 1973, p. 63).

6/ In Lāba we collected a slightly different version of this part of the legend: Bali founded Sirtung, and Xlarke, Jhārlāng. The complete text of this Tamang legend will be published shortly.

7/ Cf. Pignede (B.) Les Gurung, une population himalayenne du Nepal, Paris, 1966, pp. 171-172, as well as Bista (D.B.), People of Nepal, Kathmandu, 1972, p. 78 and Adhikari (R.K.) op.cit. p. 63.

8/ Pignede (B.), op.cit. pp. 171-173.

9/ In the upper Ankhu Khola, the word Rambot is used more than Thokra. The two words refer to the same clan in the opinion of all our informants.

10/ High Buddhist caste in the Newar hierarchy. Traditionally the Bare are goldsmiths.

11/ Cf. Hofer (A.), "Preliminary report on a field research in a western Tamang group, Nepal." Bulletin Intern. committee on urgent anthropological research, no. 11, 1969, p. 21.

12/ In the upper Ankhu Khola valley, the Tamang use the Tibetan calendar, according to which the lunar month begins on the first day of the light fortnight and ends on the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight, that is on the new moon. In the lower valley, however, the Tamang use the Nepali calendar in which the lunar month begins on the first day of the dark fortnight and ends on the fifteenth day of the light fortnight, the day of the full-moon.

13/ On these divinities and their worship, see Hofer (A.), "Note sur le culte du terroir chez les Tamang du Nepal, in: Lan-gues et Techniques, Nature et Société, t. II, Paris 1972, pp. 147-156.

14/ Pignede (B.) op. cit. p. 174.

15/ On the controversial relationship between sohrajāt and chārjāt, cf. Pignede. (B.) idem, pp. 180-187. Editors note: According to Nareshwar Jang Gurung the migi are not members of the sorhājat thars but rather are a sub-group of the Lama clan of the charjat Gurung. The Lama clan is divided in three basic groups: krongi, migi & paingi. The first group are the eldest brothers sons, the second group are of the second brothers etc. As a result, the migi should be able to intermarry with all chārjat Gurungs except those of the Lama clan.

16/ Furer-Haimendorf (C von), "Ethnographic Notes of the Tamang of Nepal", Eastern Anthropologist IX, 3-4, 1956, pp. 166-167

17/ In Tamang mār means both gold and the disk-shaped ear-ring worn by women; khurba or khruiba: to bathe.

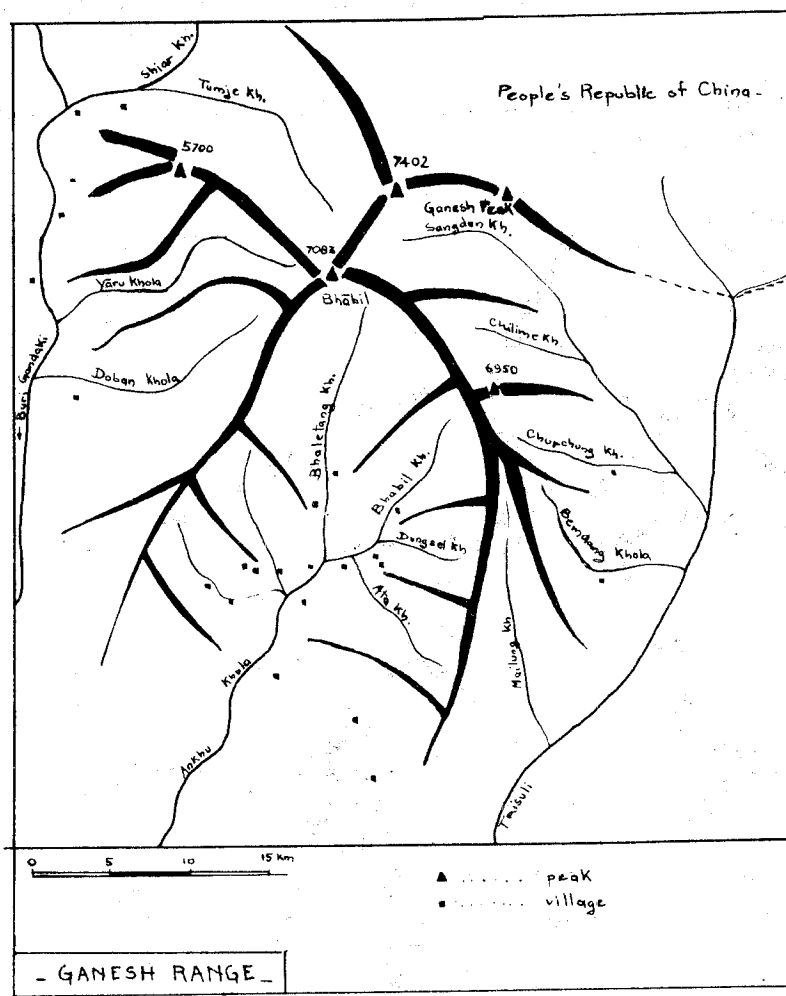
animal husbandry in the ganesh himal region: an essay in ecological synthesis

Philippe Alirol¹

I. The Setting of the Study

Ganesh Himal is a range of mountains to the northwest of Kathmandu, reaching an altitude of 7,402 m. The massif is bounded in the east by the Trisuli river and by the Buri Gandaki in the west. It is the source of the entire river basin which feeds the Ankhu Khola.

FIG: 1. The Ganesh Himal Region.



After trekking four days from Trisuli Bazar, one reaches the heart of the range; the upper Ankhu Khola valley. The marked contours of the ridges radiate from the the main peaks (Ganesh. 7402 m. Bhabil, 7083 m. etc.) in lines which are sometimes higher than 4,000 m. sometimes for several kilometers at a time. These ridges seperate the region into distinct geographic areas; sheltered valleys (such as the valleys of the Tumje Khola, Yaru Khola, Doban Khola, Hāngang Khola, Ghattya Khola, Gandkhāni Khola, Bhāletang

Khola, Bhābil Khola, Dungsol Khola, Ata Khola, Mailung Khola, Bembang Khola, Chilime Khola, Sanden Khola²) in which the settlements lie.

Normally, access from one valley to another is difficult, nearly impossible, communication can move only along the most favored ridges, usable only in the summer by the herds of the various settlements. The topography of the area most probably set the actual pattern of settlement into the region by fixing the limits of the zones of cultural influence: Tibetan, Gurung and Tamang; one encounters three different ethnic groups in this area: Tibetan-speakers (called Bhotiya in Nepali) from the northwest or the northeast, Gurungs from the southwest and the Tamangs from the southeast.

FIG: 2. The Ganesh Himal Region Divided into Sectors According to the Physical Topography.

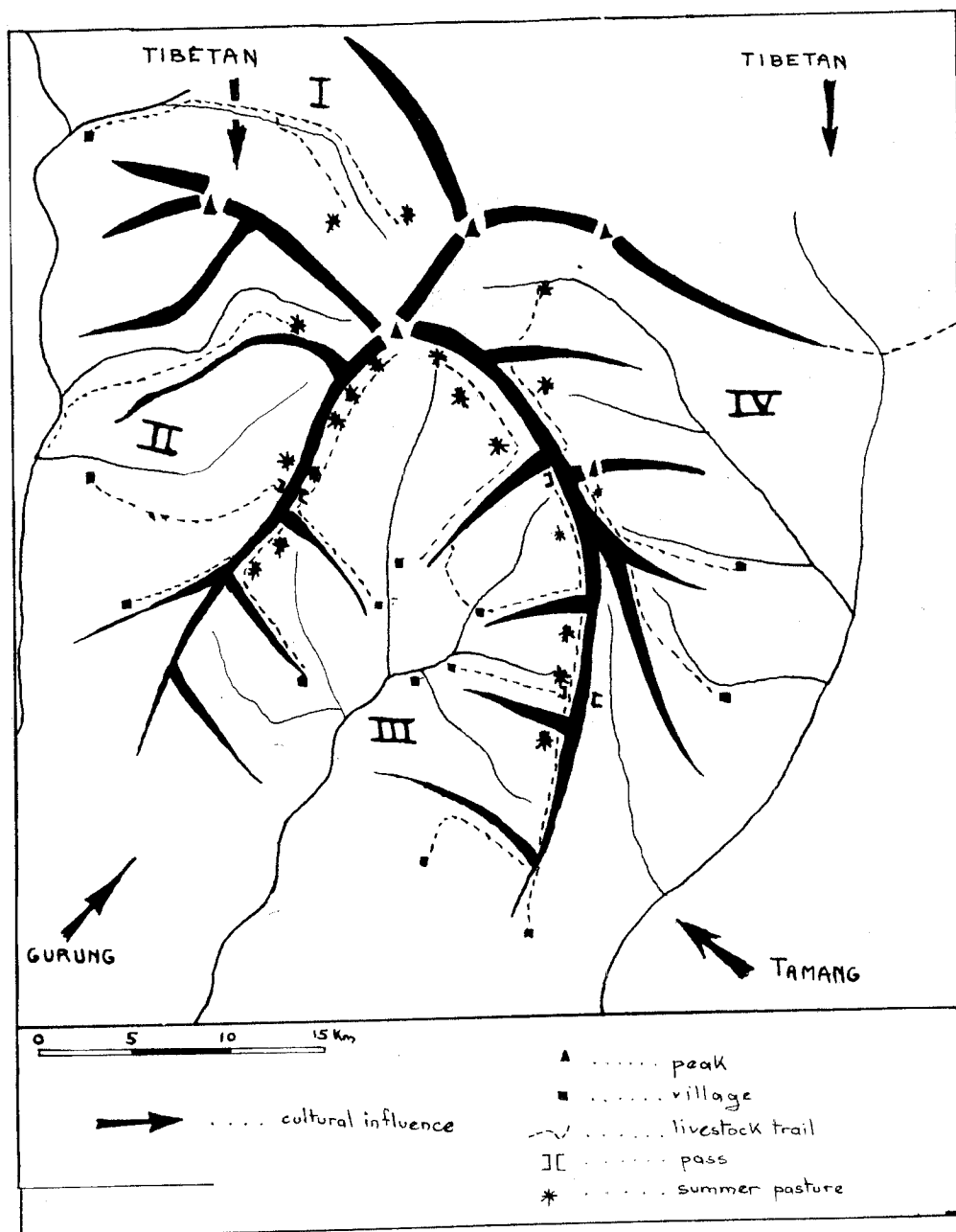


Table 1

Sectorization of the Contour Areas of Ganesh Himel Range

Region	Principle Valley	Herd Pasture Village	Ethnic Group	Max.Alt.of Pastures	Access to other Sectors
I	Tumje Khola	Ripche	Bhotiya	4300 m.	{ Base of the Buri Gandaki Valley
II	Yaru Khola	Philim	Gurung	not studied	
		Hulchuk			
	Doban Khola	Keirunja Kachigaon	Gurung	4200 m.	{ 4200 m pass
III	Ankhu Khola	Laba Khading Lapchet Tir	Tamang Gurung Gurung Tamang & Gurung	4700 m.	
		Nebar	Tamang & Gurung		
		Hindung Tipling Sertung	Tamang & Ghale ³		
		Kim dang	Tamang		{ Pangsang Pass 3900 m. Wangbu Pass 4400 m. Sangdormo Pass 4700 m.
IV	Mailung Khola	Salme	Tamang & Ghale	4600 m.	
	Chilime Khola	Gadlang Chilime	Tamang Tamang		
	Trisuli	Gholjong	Tamang		
		Combāgāng	Tamang		

One can now superimpose another dimension onto this contour relief schema, which will introduce the concept of isopotential ecological zones⁴. For our purposes, we will adopt a less detailed form of this typology, one which corresponds more closely to zones of iso-utilization than to zones of isopotentiality: We will use the following zones: high mountain, high pasture, forest and cultivated zone. The two systems correspond as follows (see Table 2.).

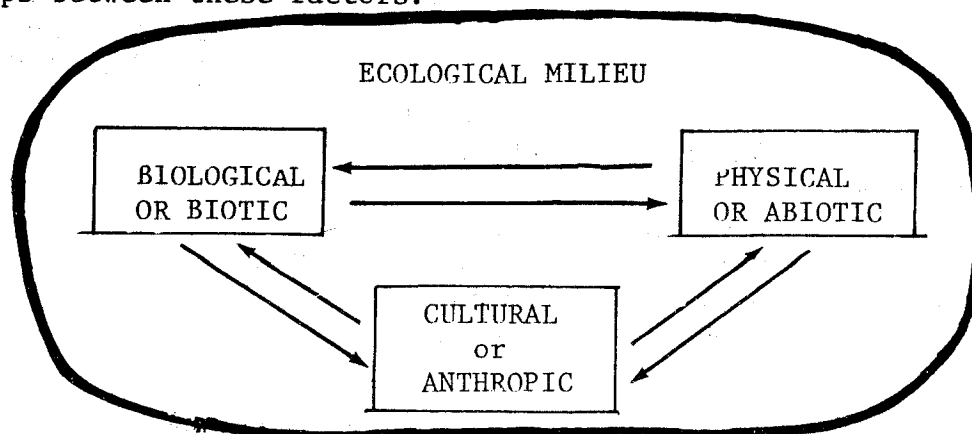
Table 2

Correspondance between Isopotential and Iso-utilization Zones

Isopotential zones	Iso-utilization zones
nival	high mountain
upper alpine level	
lower alpine level	high pasture
upper sub-alpine level	
lower sub-alpine level	forest
highland level	
hill level	cultivated zone
upper sub-tropical level	

Our purpose here is to describe some of the many features of the physical (abiotique) sphere (e.g. exposure, topography, climatology etc.) the biological (biotique) sphere (i.e. flora and fauna) and the cultural (anthropique) sphere of this region, as to discuss to interrelationships between them.

FIG: 3. The ecological milieu is determined by the combination of biological, physical and cultural factors and all the relationships between these factors.



II. The Ecological Milieu

1. The High Mountain Region (4,700 m.-7,400 m. the lower limit depending on exposure).

Here, there are numerous glaciers and the high altitude climate which dominates this zone limits access to this area from the lower zones, except for the months of July and August, and even then, only a few hunters come here looking for musk deer or kastori (Moschus moschiferus) and mountain goats or ghoral (Nemorhaedus goral). The vegetation in this zone was studied by the botanist, B. Yon, at the time of this fieldwork.

2. The High Pasture Zone (3,800 m.-4,700 m., these lower limits depend on the exposure and the degree of deforestation).

Intense cold and high snowfall limit the degree to which the zone can be utilized to the months of July and August, while the temperatures are still relatively low;⁵ the high rainfall (more than 2,000 mm.) produces a dense hydrographic network. The grazing grounds are alpine meadows and areas with rhododendrons and where medicinal plants (Swerta multicaulis, Nardostachys jastamausi, Picrorhiza scrophulariae folia) are abundant, here and there, and which are gathered in certain seasons (from July to mid-September) and sold in the commercial centers of Trisuli and Arugath Bazar. These plants represent a considerable source of income for the villagers. Despite the numerous crags and scree and the severe climate of the place, the high pasture is particularly favored for the pasturing of flocks of goats and sheep, as well as for the herds of yak hybrids. In the summer, the presence of the flocks, herds, and men drive the fauna of the region up into the highest zone. Nevertheless, one still notices many birds in the area (most often Lophophorous imperianus).

3. The Forest (2,600 m.-3,900 m., the lower and upper limits again depend on exposure and on the amount of deforestation).

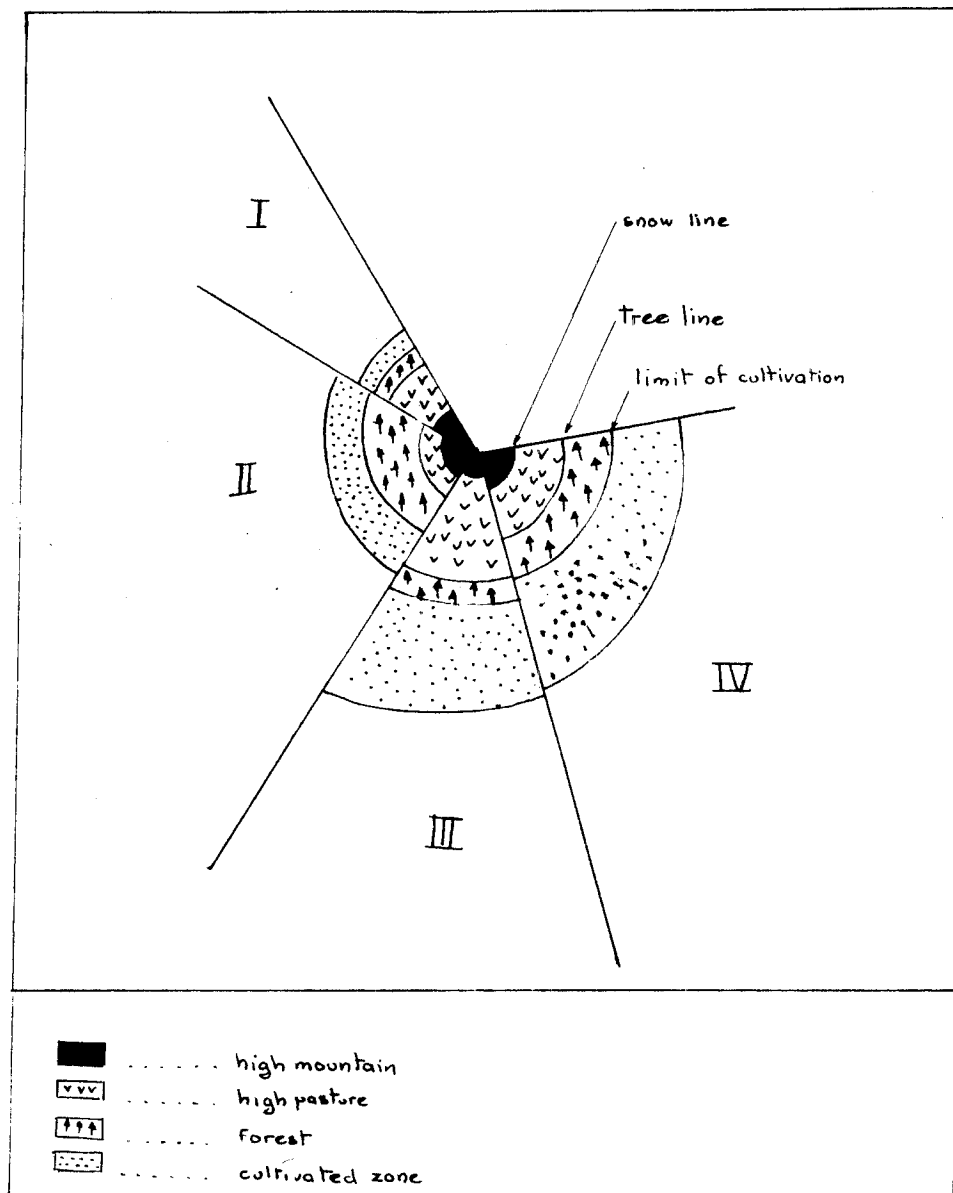
One encounters a great variety of plant species here (such as Abies spectabilis, Betula utilis, Rhododendron campanulatum, R. barbatum, R. arboreum, Juniperus indica, Quercus semecarpifolia, Pinus excelsa etc.) and their ranges have been precisely described in the work of J.F. Dobromez⁶. This zone provides villagers with firewood, lumber and winter fodder. The cattle are pastured here at the time when the flocks and herds which use the high pasture are ascending in mid-June or descending in mid-September.

4. The Cultivated Zone (1,500 m.-2,600 m. the upper and lower limits of this zone depend on the exposure and the degree of deforestation).

The villagers plant their crops in this zone; terraced fields allow the soil to be worked in areas with relatively steep slopes. Maize, potatoes, wheat and barley are the principle crops and the rotation of these crops is well regulated according to an agricultural calendar. After the harvest, the animals are allowed to graze on the stubble in order to manure the fields.

One can now make a schematic drawing of the natural milieu of this area (see Figure 4).

FIG: 4. Schematic Drawing of the Ganesh Himnal Region.



Before discussing the topic of major concern, that is animal husbandry, it is necessary to first precisely determine which of the elements belong to the natural milieu and which to the cultural milieu. This is because the types of animals raised depend on these factors and these alone.

III. Animal Husbandry

Flocks of sheep and goats are the most numerous domestic species in the area (around 60 flocks); we estimate there are about 13,000 head of sheep and goats pastured in the high pasture of the range. The sheep are of the baruwāl stock, characterized by short ears, a hooked nose and a rather short tail. They are of medium stature. The goats are of the sināl variety, the most common type in Nepal.

Every village has herds of cattle of the local breed, Bos taurus and Bos indicus with some zebu blood. As to the buffaloes which one sees only in the lowest villages (see Geographic Distribution below), they too are of a local variety. Herds of cross-breeds are limited in number (10 herds in the range). The composition of these herds are heterogenous. The animals are crosses between either a female Bos taurus and a male yak (Poephagus grunniens), or a hybrid female and a male yak. The genetic type of the father and that of the mother determines the type of hybrid which results.

2. The Vocation of Animal Husbandry-The Type of Husbandry and Social Organization.

The flocks of sheep and goats of the entire village are brought together for pasturing and average about 200 head in a massed flock. Each family owns from five to six sheep or goats in the flock for manure production. Sheep are bred also for wool production, as well as for milk and milk products. The animals are sheared twice a year (October and April). Each owner shears his own animals and the wool is spun into yarn by the mistress of the house or by one of the daughters. Clothes and blankets are made to take care of the needs of the family and excess wool is sold or exchanged in the village.

In the summer, milk and milk products (butter, curds and cheese) are important elements in the diet of the shepherds, while consumption is down in the villages during the absence of the sheep, because of problems of preservation and transport.

Meat is only occasionally eaten; at religious ceremonies (puja) or when an animal is accidentally killed or is the victim of disease.

The type of husbandry and social organization varies from one geographic sector to another. Most of our data has been collected from sectors III & IV (see Table 1). In these areas, we have observed the village flocks (about 40 of them). All the owners possess about the same number of animals, there are no large-scale owners. In the pastures, the sheep are not the property of any one individual, but of the village as a whole. This results in a

certain equality of rights (free pasturage on community land) and obligations among the animal owners (rotation of duty as shepherd or the responsibility to pay a permanent shepherd and the payment of the summer or winter pasturage tax on those fields which do not belong to the village).

The cattle herds are family-owned herds, made up of about a dozen animals. Cows and buffaloes produce only very small quantities of milk (the milk products being often kept only for small children: milk and butter, also in very small quantities are saved for traditional religious offerings). Bullocks are used as draught animals for work in the fields (such as plowing or harrowing). As with the flocks of sheep and goats, there are no large-scale owners. The family has complete autonomy vis-a-vis the rest of the group. The herd is never taken very far from the village, one or two days travel maximum during the yearly cycle, continual contact is kept between the cattle herds and the village.

The herds of hybrids, which we had observed (10 herds), brought together about fifty animals in an average herd; belonging to a limited number of owners. The animals are raised essentially for their milk and all of this milk is made into butter and cheese. This type of husbandry is quite different from the two preceding forms, since it has become part of the cash economy, based on the sale or exchange of milk products or young animals that do not give milk.

3. Geographic Distribution of the Various Herds

A survey of the animals in the Ganesh Himel region is presented in table 3.

Goth in a field (*Ph. G. Toffin*).



Table 3
Survey of Animals in the Sectors of Ganesh Himal Region

Sector	Valley	Village	Altitude m.	Ethnic Group of Village	Zone of Cultural Influence	Buffalo Herds	Cow Herds	Number of Flocks of sheep + goats in summer pasture	Number of hybrid herds in summer pasture
I	Tumje Khola	Ripche	2500	Bhotiya	Bhotiya	no	yes	0	5
II	Yara Kh. Philim Doban Khola	Hulchuk Rumchet Keirunja Kachigaon	1500 1510 1800 2100 1800	Gurung Gurung Gurung Gurung Gurung	Gurung	yes yes * * *	yes yes * * *	* 2 3 2 7	0 0 0 0 0
III	Ankhu Khola	Laba Khāding Lapchet Kupchet Tir Nebar Hindung Tipling Sertang Kindang	1800 1800 1800 1800 1800 1800 2100 2000 2000 1800	Tamang Gurung Gurung Tamang Gurung Tamang + Gurung Tamang Tamang Tamang Tamang	Gurung + Tamang Gurung	yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes	yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes	2 4 1 1 1 2 2 5 2 6	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
IV	Mailung Khola	Salme Bhalche Chilime Khola Choljong Gombāgāng Gre Patjhung	1950 1950 2300 1650 1500 2400 2300 2400	Tamang + Chale Tamang Chale Tamang Tamang Tamang Tamang Tamang	Tamang + Chale Tamang + Bhotiya Bhotiya Bhotiya Bhotiya Bhotiya	yes yes no yes no * * *	yes yes yes yes yes * * *	4 2 6 1 3 1 1 1	0 0 2 4 1 0 0 0

* Information not available.

From Table 3 we can note the following, without prejudicing our conclusions: first, that the herds of hybrids only exist in Bhotiya zones of cultural influence and second, that the occupation of the high pasture by the hybrids at Ripche (Sector I) precludes the use of these pastures by sheep and goats, thus making it necessary for the village to use the pastures in Manaslu and Himal Chuli (the right bank of the Buri Gandaki) for the high summer pasturing of these animals.

4. The Movement of the Herds-Summer and Winter.

Each type of herd or flock makes vast, but well-defined journeys throughout the year; the kind of journey made depends on three sets of parameters: the first set brings into account the zootechnical aspects of the species of which the herd is composed (i.e. adaptation to high altitude, food needs, resistance to cold and so on); the second set depends on the environment (the possibilities and constraints brought about by the biological and physical factors, finally, we introduce the factors related to the cultural milieu (utilization of the herd by man, internal and external economic systems etc).

All of these components are not totally independent of each other and certain factors are more important than others; the aim of this work now in progress is to clarify precisely the relationships between these parameters and to arrange in order of importance these limiting factors or indices (factors which can be cultural as well as biological or physical! and which vary from time to time). Finally, the movement of the herds figures as a uniquely human solution; in this equation, some suppose that culture is the constraining factor on the possibilities permitted in the natural milieu. One can understand the significance of that statement with the help of a concrete example:

Let us take the example of goats and sheep:

Table 4 Constraints and Possibilities in Goat-Sheep Husbandry.

zoötechnic constraints and possibilities	<u>food needs:</u> little constraint (gramineous plants and leguminous plants, leaves for fodder, field stubble etc.
	<u>resistance to cold:</u> good for temperatures above 0°C.
	<u>adaptation to high altitude:</u> good in the conditions of our field area (altitudes below 5000 m.) lambing season: October-November.

possibilities and constraints both physical and cultural.

high altitudes: temperatures under 00°, snowfall, potential food near zero-except in July-August.

forest zone: high rainfall in monsoon, presence of leeches (source of sores) presence of predators (panthers and bears) small dimensions of pasturable surfaces (clearings) presence of cattle herds in July and August.

cultivated zone: cultivated fields-winter crops and summer crops make the presence of flocks not desirable in the area most of the time.

shearing: desire to have a large amount of fleece (after the summer season) presence of the flock near the village (to avoid having to transport the wool).

cultural possibilities and constraints; utilization of the herd.

manure: pasturing the flock in the fields left vacant after the harvest, mostly to replenish the manure and to avoid having to transport it.

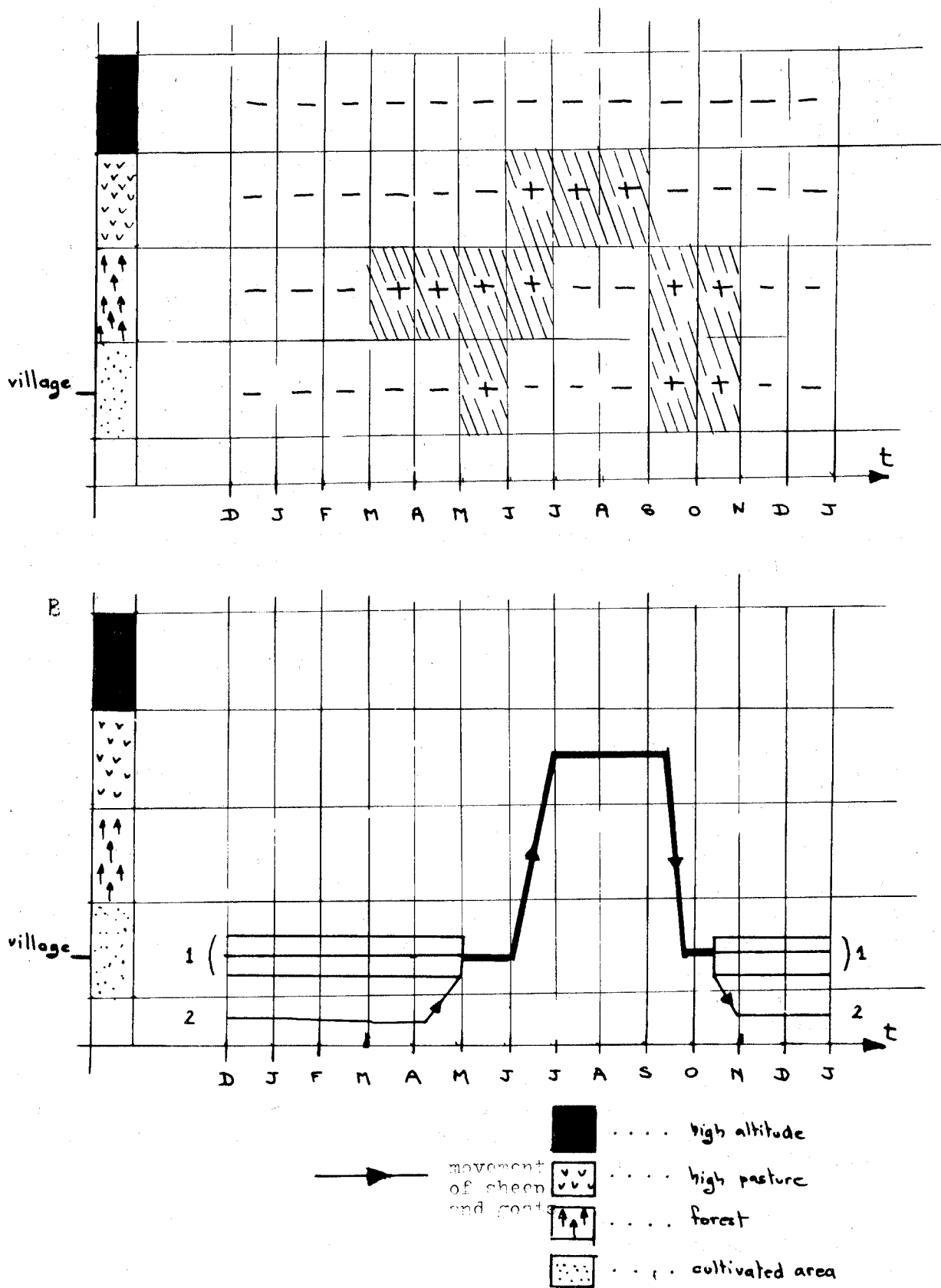
draught: milk production, maximum in June-July.

We of course haven't given an exhaustive list of the parameters which describe the features involved in this system; one must realise however, that the constraints and possibilities of the system are fixed. One can resolve the equation of the characteristics of the ecological milieu that we have studied into a graphic solution which seems most practical. The environment, during the annual cycle, seems best represented on two coordinate axes. The biological, physical and cultural factors, which are either expanding or limiting factors are represented respectively by the positive (+) or negative (-) signs of the binary language (see Figure 5).

If one compares this graphic solution, with its positive and negative signs, to the standard graph of the agro-pastoral calendar normally set down by the traditional anthropologist, one finds there is a clear correspondance.

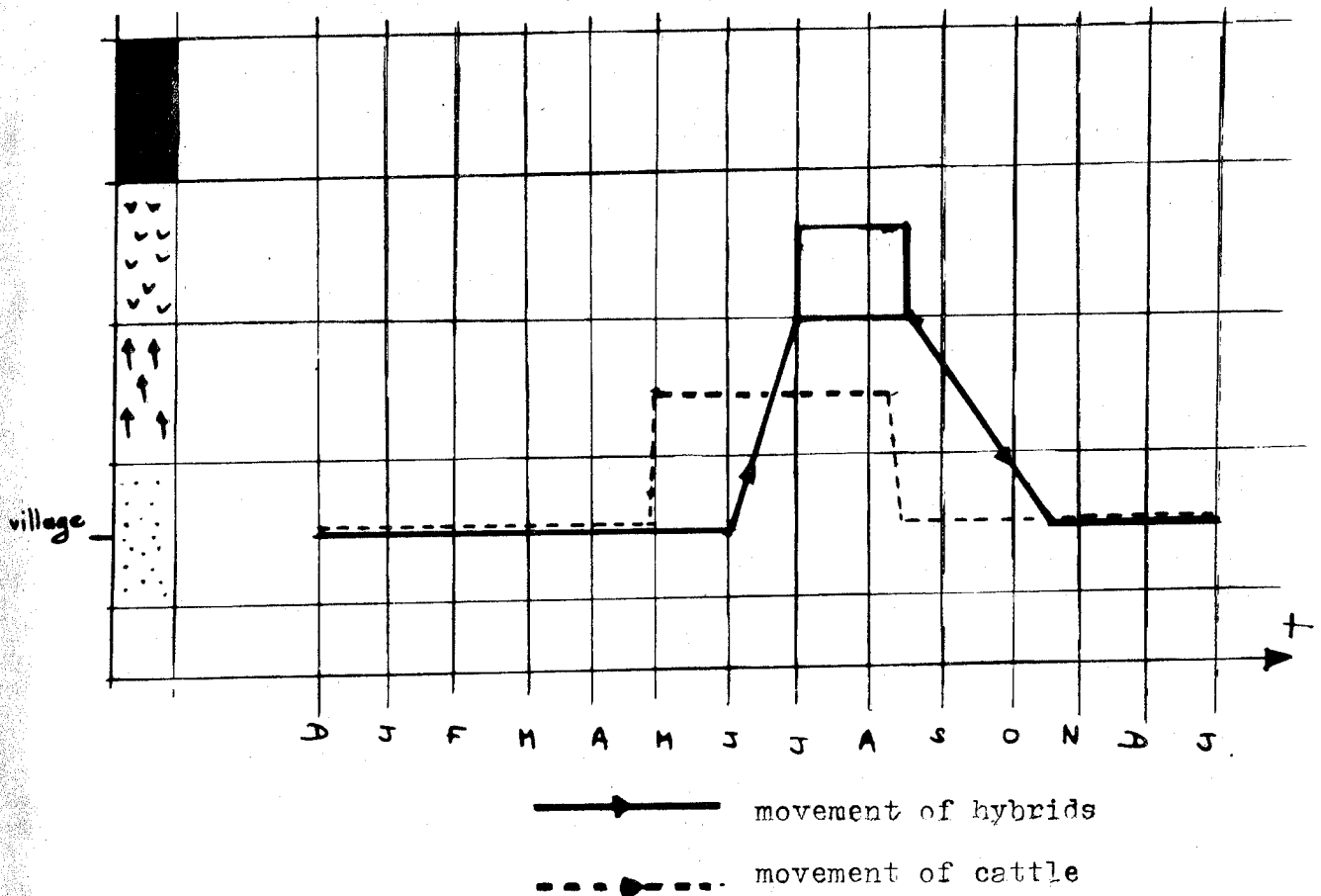
In winter, one finds there are two kinds of solutions: first the flock could be split up, each owner collecting his animals and busying himself gathering fodder for the winter supplied by the nearby forest. The animals are kept in the village area and

FIG: 5. Binary Representation of Expanding or Limiting factors (A) and Movement of Flocks throughout the Yearly Cycle (B).



outside the cultivated fields; or secondly, the flock could winter in the pastures belonging to the villages lower down in the valleys. To resume, one can say that the movement of the flocks is dominated by the constraints of the ecological milieu, man leads the movement of the flocks within the limits made possible by this natural milieu. The movement of yak hybrids and cattle follow the same rules (see Figure 6).

FIG: 6. Movement of Herds of Hybrids and Cattle through Ecological Zones throughout the Yearly Cycle in the Ganesh Himal Region.



IV. The Anthropic (Cultural) Sphere: Shepherds and Cowherds

On the average, there are two shepherds or cowherds per flock or herd. They vary in age from 10 to 65 years of age. The party is made up of a young boy and an experienced man. The first is an aide whose work entails only minor responsibility (providing supplies or leading the herd to water). The latter occupies himself with the more technical operations (transport, making butter and cheese, choice of the daily pasturing place). His great experience and skill in the techniques of husbandry make him the veritable leader of the team. Whether professional cowherds or shepherds accompany the flocks or herds for the greater part of the year or whether the owners themselves keep charge of the animals for a time, the men of the high pasture must return to the village to replenish their food supply. A system of rotation allows a steady

relationship between the village and the flock, yet gives the flocks a kind of autonomy which allows for greater mobility. The shelter used by the shepherds (goth), above all answers a need for lightness (the great mobility of the flock, the distance of movement demands a shelter which is easily transportable). The wooden frame is reduced to a ridgepole beam and a few stakes, the covering is wicker-work, the roof is in the form of a half-cylinder⁷. The utensils used in the goth are essentially the same as those found in any village house, but the number of these utensils are reduced. Inside, the activity is concentrated around the hearth, here the shepherds pass the evenings and the night. The cowherds live in shelters of dry, dressed stones roofed with shale in either slabs or shingles. Technical operations (making the butter or cheese) necessitate a heavy, bulky building material, a fixed structure which is more spacious than the goth of the shepherd. The type of habitation is fixed by the necessities of the work of the shepherds or cowherds. The basic food is corn meal (mukaiko dhido) cooked in water and eaten with chili or potatoes, curds and cheese are appreciable complements.

V. Conclusions

Animal husbandry in the Ganesh Himail Range is not very different than that practiced in other ranges in Nepal. The principal interest in doing this study was to produce a model of the ecological milieu (the ecosystem). Logically, the basic geographic properties of the system (the sectorization of the physical contours) must be precisely oriented in both space and time, the definition of this precise spatio-temporal boundary is a precondition for the study of complex ecosystems. Once these boundaries are fixed and the limits of the study are set, then one can set up a model of the common features of high pasture ecosystems in general. The ecosystem is considered as the totality of its components (biological or biotic, physical or abiotic, and cultural or anthropic). The traditional anthropologist must expand his field of vision in order to encompass all three elements of this data, going into realms with which he is often not very familiar. Few can do this alone, meaning, that in the future there should be a greater dependance on interdisciplinary research. It is through the synthesis of the results obtained in this manner that one can see how the elements of the natural milieu interact thus bringing the cultural determinants of the pastoral system into greater relief. The understanding of these complex ecosystems, like high pasture ecosystems, can not be made, in our sense, without a study of both the cultural techniques and their variations tied to the constraints of the natural milieu and the diverse cultural influences.

FOOTNOTES

1/ This essay was translated from the original French by Andrew Manzardo, see also Messerschmidt, D. "Gurung Shepherds of Lamjung Himal" Objets et Mondes, Tome XIV, Fasc. 4, Hiver 1974 pp. 307-316 for a similar treatment of a nearby group of shepherds- the text is in English and accompanied by useful photographs and diagrams-ed.

2/ All geographic names in this article are taken from the map of the Survey of India: 1 inch to 1 mile.

3/ For a discussion of the Ghale as a group distinct from the Tamang and the Gurung see Toffin, G., "The Peoples of the Upper Ankhu Khola Valley." in this issue of Contributions to Nepalese Studies-ed.

4/ Dobromez, J.F., Le Nepal, Ecologie et Phytogeographie, Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1975.

5/ 7°C. in the daytime, 1°C. at night, average temperatures were recorded in the field by Allirol and Yon.

6/ Dobromez, J.F., op. cit.

7/ See Messerschmidt, D. op. cit. p. 308 for schematic diagrams of photographs of shepherd's goth-ed.



bairagi mandals

Richard Burghart

The word *mandal* is Sanskrit in origin and has passed into the north Indian languages meaning a halo of light or circle. The word is also used in the sense of a circle of colleagues or people who pursue similar (such as literary) interests and are linked together in a loosely knit yet formally constituted organization. Devotees of the various Vaisnavite sects form *kirtan* (devotional hymns) mandals and meet regularly in their homes or in temples to sing these devotional hymns for pleasure, merit, and occasionally for hire. The sadhus (Hindu ascetics) of the sect of Vaisnavites founded by Swami Ramanand in the fourteenth century, known as Ramanandi or *bairagi* (the desireless), are also organized into regionally based mandals. The Ramanandi sect of is spread across most of northern and central India, the Nepalese Terai, and possesses a few isolated temples in the Himalayas and the Nepal valley. I have no information whether or not mandals exist also in all these regions, but in Mithila and Bhojpur (Sirha, Dhanusa, Mahottri, Sarlahi, Rautahat, and Bara jillas of Nepal; and Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Champaran, and Monghyr jillas of northern Bihar, India) the *mandal* is commonly found. Each *mandal* might cover a region of one hundred square miles or more, but it is based in the village where the elected head of the *mandal* lives. A partial list of mandals would include those based at Janakpurdham and Madhwapur in Dhanusa jilla; at Dhruvkund, Sripur, Raghonathpur, Sundarpur, and Bhagawatipur in Mahottri jilla; at Parsoni in Champaran jilla; and at Suja, Rampur, and Bhawanipur in northern Monghyr jilla. Mandals are formed voluntarily by the resident *bairagis* of the region. The *bairagis* of any particular *mandal* do not hold in common any rights to the land, nor do they possess any enduring mutually owned physical structure, such as a meeting place. Thus the *mandal* only exists insofar as the local *bairagis* take interest in maintaining it. While some mandals may be found in occasional states of activity, others are in a state of atrophy, and indeed some mandals have died out in all but name as the sadhus who provided the impetus for their formation and continuance have also passed away. Apart from such variations which one encounters in the level of activity of a *mandal*, one also encounters other differences between mandals concerning the rules of hospitality which were established at the time of the formation of the *mandal* and also in the limits to the authority (often based upon rights to the land) which the elected head of the *mandal* holds. It would be unnecessarily confusing to describe all these differences, yet to obliterate these differences and to describe instead a "typical *mandal*", one would fail to understand the particular reason for the limits of the *mandal*'s effectiveness. Thus I have chosen to present as a unity the common features of a "typical *mandal*" and

then follow with a description of three mandals; the first of which is of the type commonly found, and the second and third which are somewhat unique variations of the common type.

1.1. Officers of the Mandal. The officers of the mandal are patterned after those of the sthan (monastery). In brief, the four main officers of the sthan are the mahant, adhikari, pujari and kothari. The mahant is both the spiritual and temporal head of the sthan. The adhikari relieves the mahant of the day to day responsibility of managing the estate, although the mahant oversees the work of the adhikari and takes all final decisions concerning management¹. It is the adhikari who ensures that the tenant farmers on the temple lands deliver half their harvest to the sthan, and that the field hands perform their work and are remunerated. If the mahant should depart on a pilgrimage the adhikari acts as temporary head of the sthan. The pujari performs puja (worship) to Lord Ram and Sita in the temple and cooks the food which is first offered to the deities and then eaten by the sadhus in residence. The kothari keeps charge of the storeroom and issues the grain, pulse etc., every day to the pujari for use in puja. He also pays (in grain) the field hands and temple servants. In a large sthan these roles will be further differentiated: a manager will assist the adhikari in collection rent from the tenant farmers, a rasoiya (cook) and jalbhariya (water carrier) will relieve the pujari of the duty of cooking the food offered to Ram and Sita and a tahlu will relieve the rasoiya of the task of scrubbing the pots and cleaning the kitchen. A diwan (treasurer) will keep the daily records of income and expenditure for the kothari. The mahant will probably also retain someone to tend to the cows in the gosala (cow-shed) the horses and elephants in the stables and someone to guard the temple gate. In addition to these servants the Mahant will retain any number of personal servants to fetch his bath water, to wash his clothes, bring his tooth stick, oil and massage his body, to fan him during the hot season and so forth, as well as private soldiers to act as his bodyguard.

The officers of the mandal are the Sri Mahant, adhikari, rasoiya, jalbhariya and kotwal. The Sri Mahant is elected to this office by the sadhus of the mandal, and this is one essential difference the mahant of the sthan and the Sri Mahant of the mandal. The mahant of the sthan is the spiritual head of the sthan in the sense that he is in the direct line of guru-disciple succession with the founding mahant of the temple, and also in the sense that for the younger sadhus of the sthan he is their diksa guru (the guru who imparted the mantra at the time of initiation) and spiritual teacher. The Sri Mahant does not possess this unique authority over the mandal, nor does the Sri Mahant possess the temporal authority of the mahant in the sense that there is no common mandal property to manage. Thus the mahant rules over the sthan by his own legal right (hak); the

Sri Mahant rules over the mandal by consensus (panchayat). Both the mahant and the Sri Mahant sit on a throne which creates an aura of royal authority to their offices, but the mahant possesses both the aura and the authority; the Sri Mahant must make do with the aura.

The mandal usually meets on the occasion of a bhandara (feast), and the duties of the other officers of the mandal usually relate to the preparation of the bhandara. The mandal adhikari will ensure that all the arrangements for the bhandara are in order. He will also execute the orders of the Sri Mahant. The rasoia cooks the food, the jalbhariya brings the water for drinking purposes and for washing the rice, pulse, and vegetables. The rasoia must be either Brahman or Ksatriya and the jalbhariya of Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaisya, or any of the pure sudra castes, from whom Brahmans will accept water. The kotwal is the messenger of the mandal. Apart from the above considerations of caste (the Sri Mahant by the way may be of any caste) the Sri Mahant may appoint whom ever he likes to fill these offices given the approval of the mandal.

1.2. Election of the Sri Mahant.

दया दामा और शीलता गुण गाहेक गुणवन्त ।
साधु सेवा हरी भजन ताको नाम महन्त ॥

"He who is kind, merciful and modest, appreciates good qualities and possesses good qualities /

Serves other sadhus, and worships the Lord - that man is called mahant //

Sadhus state that these are the qualities of a good mahant and it is even more essential that the Sri Mahant should possess these qualities for he "rules" the mandal only insofar as the mahants of the mandal respect him, i.e., permit him to rule. The basis for this respect is twofold; sadhus will respect another sadhu for his spiritual attainments and devotion (his knowledge of the Ram Carita Manusa, his yogic powers, the extent of his pilgrimages, etc.) and for his "sadhu seva", in other words, the hospitality he offers to other sadhus. Thus the Sri Mahant should be wealthy enough to offer hospitality to other sadhus and if he's not wealthy he should have a sufficiently famous reputation so that there is never any difficulty in receiving alms from householders in order to offer hospitality to sadhus.

The Sri Mahantship is an elected office, but there is no election in any formal sense of the term. When the Sri Mahant of a mandal dies, any sadhu of the mandal is eligible to become the next Sri Mahant. One is not proposed for candidature by another sadhu; rather one proposes oneself by going to each kuti of the

mandal and sounding out the opinions of the other mahants as to whether or not they will support one's candidature. If most of the sadhus are willing to support the candidate then the candidate will invite all the sadhus of the mandal and possibly also the Sri Mahants of neighbouring mandals to a bhandara at his kuti. At the bhandara there is no need to propose that one be elected the Sri Mahant, for all the sadhus are aware that this is the reason for the invitation. If for any reason some of the mandali sadhus are not in favour of having the candidate as Sri Mahant, then they would have suggested to the candidate previously to delay the bhandara until he has more support. On the day of the bhandara the sadhus will discuss informally the merits of the candidate, although it is practically a foregone conclusion that the candidate will become the Sri Mahant. If all are in favour, or at least none are strenuously opposed, then they will install their host as Sri Mahant. Unfortunately no one could tell me of any case in which two mahants stood for election, so I do not know what would happen in this case. Perhaps the mandal would split into two mandals, or perhaps the mandal would cease to function until consensus was reached with the possibility that if consensus was never attained the mandal would die from neglect.

As was mentioned in section 1.1, the Sri Mahant possesses an aura of royal authority. The installation ceremony is patterned after the ceremony for the coronation of a king. There are no Vedic rites, however, nor are the services of a purohit required. The kuti courtyard is purified by smearing a paste of cowdung upon the ground and a chair called the gaddi (throne) is brought and placed there. Then the mahants of the mandal and the Sri Mahants of neighbouring mandals individually place a tilak forehead marking of candan paste on the forehead of the Sri Mahant. Then all the Sri Mahants and the more important mahants of the mandal each wrap a turban around the head of the Sri Mahant. The Sri Mahant is then garlanded with flowers and all the sadhus present toss aksat (a mixture of rice, barley, and sesame) and dub (a kind of grass) onto the mahant as a symbol of blessing. Finally each sadhu places some money at the feet of the Sri Mahant.

After the installation ceremony, the Sri Mahant offers the bhandara. After the bhandara the Sri Mahant gives a bidai (gift at the time of parting) to the sadhus. In addition to the bidai, he must also give to each sadhu twice the amount of money which that sadhu laid at his feet during his installation.

1.3. The Bhandara. The most frequent occasion which brings the sadhus of the mandal together is that of the bhandara (feast) and the importance which sadhus invest in the bhandara is obvious from the rules each mandal establishes concerning the bhandara menu (see 3.2., for example). One may distinguish between two kinds of bhandara. The first kind of bhandara is that offered by grihasthya (householders) to the mandal. Bairagis, by virtue of their renouncement from householder life consider themselves to

of a fifth varna called the sukla varna which is superior to the four varna of the grihasthya. Each varna is hierarchically based according to its relative purity vis-a-vis the other varnas. For members of the lower varnas to offer a bhandara to the highest varna of grihasthya, the Brahmins, is an act of merit, the fruit of which the host will obtain in a future rebirth (besides acquiring a reputation of piety in this life). Similarly it is an act of merit to offer a bhandara to sadhus². Householders may also offer a bhandara to the mandal in gratitude for some service which a sadhu performed to the householder. In one village about twelve miles west of Janakpurdham the villagers had always been plagued by fires which destroyed their thatched homes during the late spring when a stiff dry wind blows from the east. A bairagi who lived in the region led the villagers in a circumambulation of their village while chanting Ram's name. That year (and ever since then) the village has been protected from fires. In gratitude the villagers offered a bhandara to the sadhu's mandal. In another case (see 4.4 c.) villagers offered a bhandara to a mandal in gratitude to a female sadhu who stopped the cholera epidemic raging in the village at that time.

The second type of bhandara is that offered by a sadhu to the bairagis of the mandal, the purpose of which is the recognition of the new status of a bairagi within the mandal or the acceptance of a sadhu as a member in full standing of the mandal. This recognition or acceptance is symbolized by the fact that the sadhu of the mandal will accept the host's food. Thus unlike the first kind of bhandara which implies the superiority of bairagis vis-a-vis their host, the second kind of bhandara implies the equality of the bairagis vis-a-vis their host. The motif is the acceptance of food from the host's hand; it is not the idea of "breaking bread together", for the host does not eat with the guests. Rather he serves them food and then second and third and fourth helpings and so on until the guests literally beg him to stop. The guests then leave to rinse their mouths and wash their hands, and the host sits down to eat. Such bhandara may occur in the following such situations; installation of the Sri Mahant of the mandal, succession to the mahantship of a kuti by deceased mahant's disciple, acceptance of a new kuti as member of the mandal, and the reinstatement within the mandal of a "fallen bairagi" who had broken some rule of the sect.

Any sadhu or householder who decides to offer a bhandara to the mandal first of all notifies the Sri Mahant. The Sri Mahant ensures that the host is prepared to offer the bhandara according to the rules of the mandal and then he fixes the date of the bhandara. The Sri Mahant then gives a number of supari (betel nut) to the kotwal who visits all the kutis of the mandal, offering to each mahant a portion of supari and announcing the date and place of the bhandara. On the day prior to the bhandara, the adhikari will visit the host to make sure that the food, money, cloth, etc., required for the bhandara are at hand. Early

in the morning of the day of the bandara the rasoiya and jalbhariya will arrive and begin to prepare the meal. The host brings rice from the granary and pours it into a basket before the rasoiya. This is called Ganesa puja although in fact no puja or aarti is actually performed to Ganesa, the elephant god. Rather as Vighna-vinasak "the destroyer of obstacles", Ganesa is invoked to ensure the success of the bhandara. The host then offers the rasoiya a certain stipulated length of cotton cloth (upon which later the rasoiya ladles the cooked rice and which the rasoiya keeps at the end of the bhandara) and a stipulated amount of money, rice, and dal. This is the rasoiya's fee for lighting the fire (cula phukai). The rasoiya lights the fire and tosses into the flames a handful of rice and dal. This is called Visnu puja or sometimes Agni puja. The host then gives money and a stipulated length of cloth to the jalbhariya with which he will strain the water from the well and which he also may keep at the conclusion of the bhandara. The rasoiya and jalbhariya then begin to wash the rice, dal, and vegetables and to cook the food.

When all the food is cooked the rasoiya spreads the cloth upon the ground and ladles the rice upon the cloth. The kotwal calls all the sadhus to their places and distributes leaf plates. The sadhus begin chanting praises to their tutelary deities, Lord Ram and Sita. The pujari of the host's kuti (or if a householder is host, the pujari of the kuti in which the bhandara takes place) arranges a little of each item of food on a brass plate and offers this food to Ram and Sita in the temple. When Ram and Sita have taken of the food, the pujari brings the food leavings of Ram and Sita (the food leavings are called prasād) to the kitchen and returns each item of food to its respective pot and the rice to the pile of rice on the cloth. The prasād is then mixed with the rest of the food which was not offered to the deities thus making the prasād into mahaprasād. The host then serves the food (mahaprasād) to all the sadhus. When all the sadhus have been served, they stop chanting and the Sri Mahant or any respected sadhu of the mandal calls out the jai (jai bolna). He begins by calling out Ram and Krishna's name to which all cry "jai" (hail, victory). Then he calls out the four Vaisnavite sects to which all repeat the jai and then the name of the adi guru of the bairagi sect, the four dhams, the name of the host parents, the host relatives, and so forth³. After shouting the final jai, all the sadhus of the mandal begin to eat at the same time.

At the conclusion of the bhandara the host must offer a bidai to all the sadhus. The amount of the bidai is fixed according to the rules of the mandal. Each sadhu receives his own personal bidai of several rupees and perhaps also a dhoti. The officers of the mandal receive a special bidai. The amount of the bidai varies from mandal to mandal but the proportions remain approximately the same between the various officers in a ratio of solah ānā 16/16, ath ānā: 8/16, char ānā: 4/16, do ānā: 2/16,

and ek ānā: 1/16. For example, if the bidai of the Sri Mahant were 51 rupees, the bidai of the adhikari will be approximately 26 rupees, that of the rasoiya 12 rupees, the jalbhariya: 6 rupees, and the kotwal: 3 rupees. In addition to this all uninvited sadhus will receive a bidai and if any Naga (bairagis who are members of the military unit of the sect based at Hanuman Garhi, Ayodhya) is present bearing with him the banner of Hanuman Garhi, he will in addition to his personal bidai also receive a bidai for the monkey god Hanuman which he does not keep for himself but must give to the mahant of Hanuman Garhi.

1.4 The privileges of the Sri Mahant and the function of the mandal. The functions of the mandal relate to four different spheres of action: the conduct of the bairagi as an individual, the internal affairs of any kuti (a "hermitage" a small temple in which only one or two sadhus live) of the mandal the affairs of a kuti of the mandal vis-a-vis householders, and finally, the affairs of the mandal as a group. Not all mandals assume responsibility for all these spheres of action; moreover, in all these spheres there are recognized limits to the mandal's authority as well as practical limits to the influence which the mandal can exert in any particular situation given the authority and power of other divergent interests (villagers, the state, factions within the mandal, etc.). One cannot generalize about the functions of the mandal. Thus, what follows is a summary of various spheres of action I have found in different mandals and which may possibly exist in any mandal.

Bairagis are members of the mandal by virtue of their kuti or sthan being part of the mandal. Any bairagi who should engage in personal misconduct, such as lying, stealing, sexual incontinency, drinking toddy, eating meat, etc., would be dealt with by the mahant of the kuti or sthan in which he lives. But if the mahant engages in such misconduct, the mahant may be punished by the mandal. The mandal cannot legally drive the mahant out of the kuti unless some other sadhu who has rights to the land should agree to do so. Nor can the mandal or any bairagi for that matter, not even one's guru, excommunicate another bairagi from the sect. In such cases of misconduct the mandal might punish the guilty sadhu through some kind of personal humiliation; viz, by beating him, shaving off his hair and/or smearing his head with cow dung (such punishment would probably not be meted out on any of the more wealthy mahants of the mandal.), and then by either temporarily excluding the mahant from the mandal until he offers a bhandara or by permanent exclusion. Temporary exclusion of the guilty party with the view of reinstating him later is not always an effective means of punishment. The terms of exclusion are quite similar to the exclusion of a householder from his caste for having committed some offense against the caste. In both cases exclusion from the mandal and exclusion from the caste, the guilty party is denied food, fire and water from his peers until he offers them a bhandara. But a temporarily excluded caste

member has a certain interest in offering the bhandara to regain his caste status which becomes pressingly evident if anyone of his lineage (khandan) should die or become of marriagable age. The bairagi, however, does not depend upon the mandal in this way. It is only his reputation which is at stake. If he doesn't value his reputation, he may not seek to rejoin the mandal and if he does value his reputation he may leave the region and try to make a fresh start elsewhere. Nor can one say that the bairagis are obliged to exclude a fallen bairagi from the mandal in order to preserve their own purity. A fallen caste member is of ambivalent status. If others of his caste accept food and water from him, they may also be treated as degraded and lose their caste status for some length of time. But this is not the case with bairagi. There is no ritual imperative which would prevent them from taking food from a fallen bairagi. It is only their reputation vis-a-vis other bairagis and other mandals which is at stake, and if they value that reputation enough they may decide to exclude the fallen bairagi from their midst.

The mandal has no right to intervene in the internal affairs of any kuti, but thirteen days after the death of any mahant of the mandal the Sri Mahant recognizes and blesses that bairagi from among the deceased mahant's disciples who will become the new mahant. On the thirteenth day after the old mahant's death the funeral rituals are completed and the disciple who has performed these rituals bathes and calls the barber to cut-off his hair and thus becomes pure again. The mahants of the mandal along with the Sri Mahant arrive and the disciple who performed the funeral rituals and who will become the new mahant takes his seat upon the gaddi (or in the case of a small kuti he will sit on a blanket). The ceremony is similar to that of the installation of the Sri Mahant. The disciple cups his hands and holds them out in front of him and into which the Sri Mahant offers betel leaf and supari. Then the Sri Mahant wraps a turban around the disciple's head thus conferring the mahantship upon him. All the sadhus of the mandal gather around and toss akshat and dub onto the new mahant as symbol of their blessing. Then a basket containing flowers, rice, dub, supari, etc. called the doli najrana is laid at the new mahant's feet and into the basket, the mahant's of the mandal deposit money. The adhikari notes the amount each mahant has given, for the new mahant must give double that amount to the respective mahants at the time of bidai. The new mahant then goes to the temple and offers his obeisance to Ram and Sita and then to the Sri Mahant and then to the mahants of the mandal. After this the bhandara is served. During the course of the bhandara the new mahant will take a little food from each mahant's plate in the name of the deceased mahant, his guru. This food is then taken to the edge of the kuti and tossed over the fence where the crows will find it.

When a bairagi living alone in a kuti dies, the neighbouring villagers will not remove his body for just as only the members of a deceased person's caste remove and prepare the body for cremation so also only bairagis prepare the body of a deceased bairagi. A

neighbouring bairagi from the mandal therefore will remove the body and perform the funeral rites. If this bairagi should want to install himself in the deceased mahant's kuti as the new mahant then he will offer a bhandara to the mandal on the thirteenth day. Before his installation as mahant, however, the Sri Mahant will with candan apply the deceased mahant's tilak to the new mahant⁴. Then he will take a new tulsi kanthi (necklace), touch it to the deceased mahant's kanthi and then put it around the new mahant's neck. Then he will take a new langoti (loin cloth), touch it to the deceased mahant's langoti and then give it to the new mahant to wear. After this preliminary ceremony the installation to the mahantship will occur⁵. The mandal has no right to intervene in the affairs of any kuti within the mandal, but if there is a dispute for the succession to the mahantship, the Sri Mahant has some influence since it is he, by wrapping the turban on the successor's head, who confers the mahantship. According to tradition the most senior of all the deceased mahant's disciples becomes the new mahant, but if the mahant should find a more junior disciple to be the capable one, he may indicate prior to his decease who from among his disciples will become the next mahant. If this is not written on paper and signed by all parties concerned, a dispute for the succession may occur. Also, if a mahant dies after a brief tenure in office, his disciple may be only a small child, in which case the deceased mahant's guru bhai (bairagis initiated by by the same guru) may claim the mahantship arguing that the child disciple is not capable of managing the kuti. When such disputes occur the other sadhus of the kuti, the mahants, as well as the neighbouring villagers may all try to influence the settlement. If the Sri Mahant comes from a wealthy sthan he may try to impose a settlement by force using his own resources. But if the Sri Mahant cannot impose his will, he will call a panchayat of respected mahants from within the mandal to settle the dispute. If the panchayat is unable to settle the dispute or if one of parties to the dispute refuses to respect the decision of the panchayat, then the dispute will no doubt be taken to the district court. In such a case the Sri Mahant will defer the wrapping of the turban about the next mahant's head until the court has reached its decision.

The mandal may also serve as a kind of defense group or counterweight in any dispute involving a kuti of the mandal and the villagers in which the kuti lies. Several years ago, in a village in Muzaffarpur jilla close to the Nepal border lived an old mahant of the Kabir Panthi sect. His kuti possessed several bighas of land. A local landowner of that village drove the sadhu off the land, obliterated the samadhis (burial sites), dismantled the temple, and began to build his own house there. With the conniving of the local keeper of the land records, he had the kuti land registered in his name. The old mahant went to the Sri Mahant of a mahatyagi khalsa (a branch of the sect which renounces the householder life to the greatest extent. They smear ashes on their body, wear no cotton clothing, and always travel).

The Sri Mahant of the mandal sent word to his guru bhai who arrived several weeks later with about two hundred nearly naked mahatyagis. Together with the mahatyagis, the sadhus of the mandal went to the Kabir Panthi mahant's village armed with lathis (bamboo staffs) and captured the local landowner. They then destroyed his half-built house, rebuilt the temple and delivered the landowner to the police. The case is in the still in the courts. Another example of a mandal defending a sadhu's interests vis-a-vis householders will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Finally the mandal regulates its own internal affairs. It will formulate rules concerning the standard bhandara and bidai of the mandal. It will decide on the application for membership into the mandal by a new kuti. The application is not formally made. Rather, when a sadhu builds a new kuti in the area, on the day of the installation of the deity in the temple, he will invite the mandal and offer them a bhandara. By accepting food from the mahant of the new kuti, the new kuti becomes a member of the mandal and the mahant will be invited to all future bhandaras of the mandal. The mandal may also meet to organize a festival or a sacrifice or the installation of a Hanuman banner to which all the kutis of the mandal will contribute. Finally, as was described in section 1.2, the mandal meets to elect a new Sri Mahant upon the decease of the former one.

2.1 The Nilpur Mandal. The situation in Nilpur is tense and the position of the Sri Mahant is precarious. Since the Sri Mahant of the Nilpur Mandal took me in his confidence in providing me with some of this information, I shall not betray that confidence by mentioning names and places. Nilpur is thus a fictitious name.

2.2 The origin of the Nilpur Mandal. Nilpur is a village hardly more than twenty years old. Prior to that time the land was mostly jungle, approximately one thousand bighas of which was held as birta (royal land grant usually tax free, to a noble, Brahmin, or mahant) by a zamindar. The zamindar built a house in the jungle and lived there with his son, domestic servants, a blacksmith, and a few agricultural workers. One day a bairagi passed through the area on his way to somewhere else. The bairagi with his matted hair and ash smeared body sat down under a tree and recited the Ram Carita Manusa during the next nine days. The zamindar was impressed by the bairagi and asked him to stay. One bigha of farmland surrounded on four sides by jungle was alienated in the name of Ram and Sita and the bairagi built his kuti there. As land became scarce elsewhere, people of a farming caste emigrated to the region, cleared large tracts of jungle and tilled the land as tenant farmers for the zamindar. Later the old zamindar died. His son, who lived in the city, appointed a manager for the estate and came to Nilpur twice annually in the spring and fall to oversee the work of the manager. Thus, at present in the village of Nilpur dwell the zamindar's manager and domestic servants, the

blacksmith, one pandit, one bairagi, and the members of this one particular farming caste who comprise nearly eighty per cent of the village population.

The situation is not untypical of elsewhere in the region where sadhus had gone to live in the jungle of the Nepalese Terai and with the recent scarcity of land began to find themselves surrounded by neighbours. The Nilpur mandal dates from the time of the abolition of the zamindari (1959 A.D.) and the creation of the village panchayat system (1962 A.D.). The zamindar's son sold off most of the land. He had been investing in real estate in the city, and the villagers anticipated that he would sell of the remainder of his land. Meanwhile with the introduction of the "one man one vote" the farmer caste controlled the village panchayat. The bairagi and the farmers never took well to each other. If a householder invites a sadhu to a dinner on the occasion of a marriage, sacred thread ceremony, Satynarayan puja, etc., it is customary to give to the sadhu at the time of parting a bidai of several rupees, or grain or a dhoti. The farmers didn't. The sadhu accused the farmers of meanness of spirit. The farmers accused the sadhu of greediness. Curiously enough, in Nilpur more than half the farmers are Vaisnavites, but of the Kabir Panthi sect which maintains that celibacy is not requisite for being a sadhu. When the bairagi took up a collection for the annual installation of the Hanuman banner in the kuti courtyard, the farmers neither contributed nor appeared at the ceremony. One day a farmer, who owned the field bordering on the kuti land, was washing his towel by the kuti well. The towel accidentally fell into the well. A heated exchange ensued with mutual accusations. The bairagi wielding a lathi (a bamboo staff) drove the farmer off the kuti land and forbid him to use the well. A half-hour later the farmer with his brothers arrived and beat the sadhu with their lathis. A few weeks later the sadhu went away to his guru's sthan. When he returned to Nilpur, he found his kuti looted and five katta of his land, whereupon grew banana trees, had been captured. The banana trees had been cut down, the soil ploughed over, and the earthen dyke bordering his and his neighbour's field had been extended to enclose the five katta within the neighbouring farmer's plot.

The bairagi went to the house of the zamindar's son who happened to be in the village at the time. The zamindar's son decided to call a meeting of the village panchayat. At the time of the zamindari the zamindar had settled many village disputes, but with the abolition of the zamindari and the creation of the village panchayat system, political power passed into the hands of the farmers. The zamindar's son could no longer impose his will on the farmers, nor were the farmers strong enough to impose their will on the zamindar, who with one hundred bighas of land was still the largest landholder in the village. The pradhan panch of the village, who was a farmer, agreed before the zamindar's son to call a meeting of the panchayat, but he later procrastinated. Only two days later when he saw the sadhu walking

off in the direction of the police post in another village did he call back the sadhu and set the date for the meeting of the panchayat. The sadhu knew that the panchayat would comprise the zamin-dar's son and the village pandit, both of whom he could count upon, and the pradhan panch and two other members, all of whom were farmers and upon whom he could not count. He had also heard rumours that his neighbour had been telling people in the village that the five katta of land in question were actually his and not the sadhu's. He claimed that the sadhu had cut down the five katta from the jungle outside the kuti boundary at the time before the farmers arrived in the region. When the farmer bought the land up to the kuti boundary, these five katta became the property of the farmer. Thus the five katta which the sadhu had cultivated in the absence of neighbours and under the benign neglect of the zamindar actually belonged to the farmer. Prior to the panchayat meeting, the zamindar met with the sadhu. According to the zamin-dar's son the five katta were part of the kuti land, but the issue could only be settled by calling in a surveyor. The sadhu agreed to this, but the zamindar's son suggested otherwise. Since the farmers control the village and he (the zamindar's son) does not live in the village, a just settlement would be untenable. Even if the panchayat should decide to return the land to the sadhu there is no guarantee for the sadhu's protection. As soon as the zamindar's son leaves for the city the farmers by force could recapture the land. Village harmony is more important than justice. A stable cool injustice is preferable to an unstable hot justice. The sadhu saw the logic of the zamindar's son argument, but he preferred the coolness to the injustice. When the panchayat convened, the bairagi conceded the land to the farmer, but gave false testimony by inflating the value of the goods stolen from the kuti. The farmer disputed the amount of grain, tools, and money that he had looted. It was the sadhu's word against the farmer's. The farmer lost. He was ordered to pay a two hundred rupee fine for having beaten the sadhu and to compensate in cash for the stolen money and goods. With the compensation the sadhu purchased several katta of land elsewhere and with the two hundred rupees he formed the mandal.

2.3. Formation of the Nilpur Mandal. After the decision of the panchayat, the bairagi visited all the kutis in the neighbouring area and invited the mahants to a bhandara at his kuti in one week's time. On the day of the bhandara twenty-three mahants arrived twenty-two of whom were Ramanandi sadhus and one of whom was a Kabir Panthi of farmer caste from Nilpur, who had not taken sides in the recent dispute and who was celibate more by fate than by choice. Of the twenty-three kutis one had a pakka brick mandir (temple) with five bighas of land. All the others were similar to the Nilpur kuti ---- a thatched hut with between several kattas and two bighas of land; in other words, they all depended to some extent on the cooperation of villagers and the charity of patrons. Each kuti contained one and occasionally two sadhus but no more than that.

When the sadhus arrived that day cilams (clay pipes in which hemp is smoked) were passed around and the Nilpur bairagi mentioned the insult of not receiving a bidai from the immigrant farmer caste. He also informed them of the outcome of the recent dispute over the five katta of land, and he suggested that all the sadhus of the region should band together and establish a rule for the minimum bidai that they would accept from householders. He also suggested that a mandal should be formed. The sadhus saw the need for this, but when the Nilpur sadhu began a discussion of who should be selected as the Sri Mahant, there was some uneasiness. The Nilpur sadhu reassured them by saying that there are big sadhus and little sadhus, but like the leaves of the thulsi plant, they are all pure. When the Nilpur sadhu left to prepare the bhandara in the kitchen, the other sadhus discussed the candidature of their host. The Nilpur sadhu had been trained at a large and respected sthan. He could read and write. He had gone on pilgrimage to three of the four dham. He was also a tyagi with long matted hair that reached to the ground and tyagi sadhus are considered to be at a higher stage of renouncement than "bastra dhari" sadhus who have their hair shaved and wear sewn clothing. Moreover, because of his appearance a tyagi shadhu is usually more successful than bastra dhari in receiving alms. With the total inadequacy of landed wealth within the mandal, a Sri Mahant capable of raising substantial amounts of alms is a definite advantage, if not a necessity.

A chair was brought to the courtyard and the Nilpur sadhu sat down upon it as if it were his gaddi. The sadhus of the twenty-three other kutis offered the tilak, wrapped a turban about his head, and placed garlands of flowers around his neck. Then each sadhu placed some money at the feet of the Nilpur sadhu. The amount each sadhu offered was carefully noted.

The Sri Mahant decided with the consent of the mandali sadhus who should be appointed adhikari, rasoiya, jalbhariya, and kotwal. It was further decided that if any sadhu of the mandal should offer a bhandara, all the sadhus of the mandal must be invited, and at any bhandara offered by either householders or sadhus, the minimum bidai which they would accept would be two rupees. In addition to this, the special bidai for the Sri Mahant would be 11 rupees, the adhikari's badai would be 5.50 rupees, that of the rasoiya would be 2.50 rupees plus 1.25 ser of rice and ten hand-lengths of cloth, for the jalbhariya 2.50 rupees bidai and 1.25 hand-lengths of cloth and for the kutwal one rupee. When the mandali sadhus agreed to all these proposals, the food was served by the Sri Mahant as host. After the bhandara the Sri Mahant gave a two rupee bidai to each of the sadhus plus twice the amount which they had laid at his feet at the time of the cumawan. Everyone departed home.

2.4 The activities of the Nilpur Mandal. No doubt there are factions within the farmer casts which divide the village panchayat and render it incapable of taking certain decisions, but *vis-a-vis* the bairagi, all the farmers were united in opposition. With the anticipated departure of the zamindar's son from the village, the sadhu had only the village pandit to protect his legitimate interests. The village pandit was hopelessly outnumbered in the panchayat and the sadhu knew the first rule of village politics: "जिस की लाठी इसकी भैंस" (whoever wields the stick, claims the buffalo). Without any doubt this was the main reason behind the sadhu's sudden interest in forming the mandal. The sadhu sought to organize his neighbouring sadhus to support him in any future encounter with the farmers. For the sadhu the mandal took the place of the zamindar's son.

Since the time of the land dispute, the situation in Nilpur has been one of mutual avoidance and non-cooperation. The sadhu has had to make some adjustments. The farmer in the village who owns a mill and used to mill the sadhu's grain will no longer provide this service. The sadhu must carry his rice and wheat to a bazaar two miles away to do this. Previously a farmer might loan a plough for day to the sadhu or supply a little ghee or milk if the sadhu needed it for a festival, but they no longer do this. Although one may succeed in begging from wealthy landowners and from neighbours to whom one passes the cillum and offers prasad, one is less successful in begging from distant shopkeepers and service castes with whom one does not meet informally. Now the sadhu needs money to pay the mill operator, to buy ghee or to repair a tool. When the sadhu's bucket fell into his well, he did not possess the iron hook (like a fish hook) which is lowered down into the well by a rope in order to fish the bucket from the well. A farmer had such a hook, but refused to loan it to the sadhu for a half-hour. The sadhu was obliged to purchase one at the bazar for five rupees. Thus the sadhu needs money. Before, he could live off the fat of the land and the zamindar and depend upon the occasional grudging services of the farmers; now he sell his fruits and vegetables at the twice weekly bazaar in a neighbouring village to earn the money to purchase oil, ghee, incense or to mill the rice and wheat, or to repair his gardening implements.

This in part explains the lack of activity of the Nilpur mandal. The mandal was formed predominantly in the sadhu's self-interest to defend by force if necessary his legitimate interests *vis-a-vis* the farmers. The situation has not yet come to a head, so the mandal remains in the wings. There was one tense moment several years ago when the Nilpur mandal decided to hold a day long festival on the occasion of the installation of a special Hanuman banner, replete with gold foil and pictures of Ram and Sita. The banner was to be installed at the Nilpur kuti. The farmers banded together and decided to install their own Hanuman banner on the very same day only two hundred yards away. They also decided to call a band and dancers to their festival, which

if not by intention at least in fact would attract the visitors from the sadhu's Hanuman banner to their own Hanuman banner. At that time the mandal decided to revoke the membership of the Kabir Panthi farmer from Nilpur. The reason for this was that the Kabir Panthis, being householders, were not really sadhus. Or at least that is how it was explained to me. But one cannot help but suspect that the Sri Mahant wanted also to expel someone who was at best a fence sitter, at worst a fifth columnist.

Being neighbours, the sadhus of the Nilpur mandal visit one another frequently, but as a group the mandal has met formally only on three occasions in the last ten years ---- once on the occasion of the installation of the Hanuman banner and twice on the occasions of the bhandaras for a deceased sadhu of the mandal. It costs approximately 200 rupees to offer a bhandara within the mandal --- a sum which the Sri Mahant cannot easily afford. If he had more land he could offer more bhandaras to consolidate the mandal. On the other hand, if he had more land he would have more power in the village and hence less need for the mandal. Concerning the two sadhus who died, the nearest neighbouring sadhu performed the funeral rites and the Sri Mahant roamed the region begging rice, pulse, yoghurt, etc. to hold the bhandara. Since neither sadhu had a disciple, there was no question of the Sri Mahant approving the succession to the mahantship of the kuti. The kutis fell vacant. One sadhu gave shelter to a mairam and later had a child by her. The Sri Mahant took no action to expel the sadhu from the mandal. The reason might have been the particular companionship between these two sadhus. Or it might have been that the sadhu did not want to initiate any divisive movement within the mandal at a time when its unity was more important to him. If the Sri Mahant was more interested in the reputation of the mandal vis-a-vis other sadhus and other mandals he might have felt it in his interests to expel the fallen bairagi. Thus the Nilpur mandal now contains twenty-one kutis and it will no doubt continue to exist as long as the Sri Mahant and farmers live at Nilpur and the Sri Mahant takes the effort to maintain the mandal. The Sri Mahant's disciple died of dysentery several years ago. If the Sri Mahant cannot find another disciple then his kuti will fall vacant upon his death. The Nilpur mandal will probably then also cease to exist and the neighbouring farmers will capture the vacated kuti land.

3.1 The Suja Mandal. I know little about the Suja Mandal and all that I do know was told to me by a single informant. Because Suja is not at all close to my base for fieldwork, I have not been able to visit the sthan to corroborate any of this information. If it were not for the fact that this is the only information I have suggesting a possible variant of the mandal, I would not present the information at all.

3.2 The internal organization of the Suja mandal. Bodh Bali ji lived about two hundred years ago and was the disciple of Murukh Das who founded Sirsiya sthan. Later, when the mahantship of Sirsiya sthan fell to Bodh Bali Ji, the local nawab made a generous land grant to the sthan and Bodh Bali Ji left to travel. In the course of his travels, he founded two other sthans in north Bihar --- Jorapura and Suja (located about twenty miles from Baroni in northern Monghyr jilla, Bihar). He died at Suja and since his samadhi is there, Suja sthan became considered the gaddi (throne) and Sirsiya and Jorapura became baithaks (meeting places) of the Suja gaddi. The Suja sthan was wealthy from the start. I was told that it used to possess 4000 bighas of land and 90,000 rupees tahsil (land revenue). This may be an exaggeration, since exaggeration is a legitimate form of praise in Nepal and India, but there is no denying the wealth of Suja. The Sri Mahant travels to a bhandara on an elephant, preceded by flag-bearers and kettle drum beaters and followed by bullock carts of food, firewood, and cooking utensils. The bhandara lasts three days. The evening of the first day is kacca: rice, pulse and vegetable. The second day is pakka, in the early morning lassi is offered to drink to all the sadhus for which 160 kilograms of milk and 80 kilograms of sugar are required. At mid-morning, a light meal of ciura (parched flattened rice), dahi (yoghurt), vegetable curry, and sweets is served. In the afternoon, the main feast is offered comprising puri (unleavened bread fried in ghee), tasmei (rice pudding), vegetable curry, dahi, and sweets. At mid-morning of the third day, kacca food is served: rice, vegetable curry, and kari-bari (a rich soup prepared with pulse flour, dahi, neem leaves, and other spices). After the meal of the third day the bidai is given. There are three categories of membership in the mandal which are determined by the landed wealth of the kuti. A kuti with more than 15 bighas must give in all a bidai of 1,051 rupees to be divided among the Sri Mahant, the other officers of the mandal, and the members of the mandal. A kuti possessing between six and fifteen bighas must give a bidai of 551 rupees. A kuti with less than six bighas must give a bidai of 251 rupees. For all of these cases the bidai of the Sri Mahant remains constant at 51 rupees.

The Suja Mandal is unique in that the mahant of the Suja sthan always holds the office of the Sri Mahant of the Suja mandal. With "4,000 bighas of land and 90,000 rupees tahsil" the Suja mahant was obviously the most powerful person in the region --- this power is due not only to the fact that many of the Sadhus in the vicinity trace their origins back to Suja sthan, but also and more important because the Suja mahant was the zamindar of the region and could influence mandal affairs through his control of the land. Thus the Suja mahant ruled more by right (hak) than by consultation. This interpretation is confirmed also by the presence of Rampur sthan and Bhawanipur sthan about twenty miles distant in the northern part of the jilla. These two sthans were almost as wealthy as Suja. Since these two sthans had their own

mandals, it indicates that Suja's peers lay outside the mandal and so within the Suja mandal, Suja sthan could rule by hak.

The authority of the Suja Sri Mahant, however, has its limits as may be learned from the following story. Unfortunately the person who told me this story did not witness any of the following events, but heard about it later as a "story". By the time I heard the tale, it had become more a lesson in morals than in sociology. Eliminating the moral conclusions and the list of characters, the following events occurred at Suja. In the eighth generation of Suja mahants, the mahant found himself with very little land at all, due to no fault of his own. Wanting to rebuild the financial basis of the sthan, he appealed to the mandal for help. The various mahants of the mandal made contributions so that the Suja Mahant could purchase land in the name of Suja sthan. In this way, about sixty-five bighas were acquired. Later, in the eleventh generation of mahants of Suja sthan, there was a mahant who smoked enormous quantities of ganja and offered lavish hospitality to others without giving any thought to how much wealth the sthan actually possessed. The mahant eventually found himself in debt to another sadhu within the mandal. This sadhu traced his spiritual lineage back to Suja, but he was not the Suja mahant's guru bhai nor was his guru dwara (the sthan where he received initiation) Suja sthan. Later, an agreement was signed between the mahant and the sadhu to the effect that the sadhu would take over management of the sthan. The sadhu used his managerial powers to place himself on the throne of Suja sthan. The sadhus of the mandal arrived to enquire how the sadhu had usurped the throne. When the deposed mahant and the usurper both presented their cases, the mandal by panchayat decided to back the usurper. The usurper thus prepared a bhandara for all the sadhus of the mandal as well as for the Rampur and Bhawanipur mandals. On the day of the bhandara the mandali sadhus and the Sri Mahants of Rampur mandal and Bhawanipur mandal wrapped the turban and offered the tilak to the usurper, who thus became the legitimate mahant of Suja sthan and the legitimate Sri Mahant of Suja mandal.

4.1. The Janakpur Bhavan (Fifty-two) Kuti Mandal. Events which lie beyond the reach of living memory have a way of being accelerated into the distant past and invested with an aura of antiquity and timelessness which they may not possess. Moreover, one tends to invest the past with those qualities which the present lacks. The Janakpur Bavan Kuti mandal is invested with such an air of antiquity and sanctity, that when one is confronted with its present disarray and ineffectiveness, one naturally wonders what the past was really like and what were the causes of the decline of the mandal. Of course, all the time one must keep in the back of one's mind the possibility that the mandal was never really effective and it is only the absence of facts and a natural predilection for nostalgia which have made the present Kali Yuga seem to be less than fifty years old. With the help of two bairagis who

are nearly ninety years old and the cooperation of several mahants who showed me some of their temple records I shall describe what I have learned about the history of the Janakpur Bavan Kuti Mandal.

4.2. The Composition of the Bavan Kuti Mandal.

बावन कुटी बहतर कुण्ड

सुर नर मुनि सब नावहि मुण्ड

"Fifty-two kutis, seventy-two ponds,
Devta, men, saints ---- all bow their heads"

Sri Vaidehi Saran

The seventy-two ponds refer to the seventy-two ponds of ancient Janakpur as listed in the Sri Mithila Mahatyam, III, 7-20. Ancient Janakpur was the capital of Mithila during the Treta Yuga, when the Vaidehi dynasty ruled the land bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Ganga, on the east by the Kosi, and on the west by Gandaki. It was Raja Janak (Sirdhwaj) of the Vaidehi dynasty who found the goddess Sita as a baby, raised her as his daughter in Janakpur, and married her to Ram Chandra of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. In those days, the capital of Mithila at Janakpur was circular in form and approximately twenty miles in diameter, with its centre at the present Janki Mandir of Janakpurdhan. Along the circumference of that circle stood the four gates of the city defended by Mahadeva Mithileswarnath in the east (which no longer exists and had been replaced by Dhanusa as a Pilgrimage site for devotees), Kalyaneswarnath in the south, Jaleswarnath in the west, and Ksireswarnath in the north, and it is along this outer perimeter that sadhus and pilgrims walk during the Madhya Parikrama circumambulation of Janakpur during the bright lunar fortnight of Phalgun. It is within this Madhya Parikrama, therefore, covering an area of approximately 300 square miles that the Janakpur Bavan kuti mandal lies. Some sadhus claim that at the time of Raja Janak there were fifty-two kutis. Most sadhus say that at the time of the formation of the mandal there were fifty-two kutis. At any rate, there are well over two hundred kutis at present in the mandal, of which no more than forty can be of the original fifty-two. That no one knows the exact number of kutis at present in the mandal is indicative of its present disorganization, although most sadhus do not see the matter this way. For them the number of kutis in the mandal is countless, which is in turn a reflection of its own glory. Concerning which sadhus were instrumental in forming the mandal and when that occurred, I have not found any definitive information. Nor can I list with any degree of certainty the names of those kutis which comprised the original fifty-two. Indeed it may be possible that there were somewhat more or less than fifty-two at the beginning, for there are fifty-two spiritual clans (dvara) of the Vaisnavites sects and fifty-two spiritual clans (marhi) of the Sannyasi sect. There are

also, according to tradition fifty-two sons of Indra (king of the gods), whose palace is situated atop Mount Meru. Thus the number fifty-two may have been chosen for its spiritual appeal rather than mathematical accuracy. Quite definitely some of the original kutis, such as that of Prem Das on the banks of the Dudhmati river of the Bhura Bhatt paramahansa, no longer exist. But Prem Das is remembered by his disciples and a mound of brick strewn earth and a disused well in an aubergine field enabled me to track down the all but forgotten existence of the Bhura Bhatt paramahansa. How many other kutis lapsed without a trace cannot be known. Thus a list of the original fifty-two kutis (assuming there were fifty-two) will most likely remain incomplete. The value of trying to form such a list lies not with the names of the kutis but with the kinds of kutis which then existed.

Within the mandal were seven sthans (Ram Mandir, Janki Mandir, Laksman Mandir, Hanuman Nagar Sthan, Basahiya Sthan, Simardehi Sthan, and Matihani Sthan) which received Kus birta bitalab land grants from the Makwanpur Rajas during the eighteenth century prior to the conquest of Nepal by Pritivi Narayan Shah⁶. In addition three other sthans (Barahi Sthan, Bilarak Sthan, and Birpur Sthan) located just across the border in northern Bihar received similar land grants during the eighteenth century, and during the mid-nineteenth century they built branch kutis in Janakpur. These ten sthans possessed entire mauja (a village as administrative unit) containing both raikar and birta land. On the raikar land, the mahants acted as zamindar responsible for collecting the malpot (land revenue) from the tenant farmers. Malpot was approximately 10 rupees per bigha of land, which at that time was the equivalent of ten maund of rice, (i.e. approximately half the paddy harvest). The mahant forwarded the malpot onto the Sarkar Guthi Mal office deducting a one ānā (1/16th) commission. The birta land was tax free and usually cultivated under the batai system whereby the tenant farmer gave one-half of all produce of land (rice, wheat, pulse, straw, etc.) to the mahant. In addition to the rights to the land which the mahant held, the kus birta bitalab grant also conferred upon the mahant the right to exact unpaid labour, to collect certain levies on marriage, remarriage, sale of toddy, hides and bones, vegetable oil, etc., and to tax the shopkeepers in the bazar. In legal cases not involving capital punishment, banishment, or excommunication from caste as the penalty, the mahant could administer justice and collect the fines and keep them. Moreover certain royal levies, such as gaddi mamarakh on the occasion of the coronation of the king which symbolized one's fealty to the sovereign, the mahant was exempted from paying. The land so granted was inheritable, inalienable, and held in perpetuity. The Makwanpur Raja seemed even to have foregone his right to eminent domain for at the conclusion of these land grants it is written that whoever should deprive Ram and Sita of this land shall be reborn as a worm living in excrement for sixty-thousand years. With their immense land and tax free holdings, their

private soldiers, judicial authority, land held in perpetuity, and the absence of governmental supervision these large sthans were like little kingdoms within the kingdom of Makwanpur.

Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors seemed less inclined to grant entire mauja to bairagi. The above land grants which were issued by the Makwanpur Rajas were confirmed by King Girban Yuddha Bikram Shah in Samvat 1867 (1811 A.D.) but no such grants were given to new sthans in the region by the Shah dynasty. Instead they preferred to grant kus birta grants of sufficient land (five to thirty bighas) to bairagis upon which they could build their kutis. In Janakpur, such grants were given to Ratna Sagar Sthan, Agni Kunda Sthan, and Sita Kund Kuti during the early nineteenth century. Most of the kutis within the mandal which received such land grants are located in the Pirari Kharol mauja on the west side of town. Scattered between these small birta land holdings were plots of raikar land upon which other bairagis built their kutis.

Concerning these kutis which were built on raikar land, it must be mentioned that the present town of Janakpur is built upon three contiguous mauja of kus birta bitalab land belonging to Ram Mandir, Janki Mandir, and Laksman Mandir. A fourth contiguous mauja, the Pirarai Kharol mauja, belongs to a number of sthans such as Ram Mandir, Ratna Sagar, Agni Kund, and Sita Kund. Thus, for the bairagis who came to Janakpur and built their kutis on raikar land the zamindar from whom they received land was also a sadhu.

The earliest reference I have found to the Bavan Kuti Mandal is in a binti patra (entreaty) which Mahavir Das of Sita Kund kuti wrote to an unnamed Rana in Samvat 1952 (1895 A.D.). Using this as a cut-off point one may eliminate all the caste based and zamindar kutis in present Janakpur from ever having been a member of the original fifty-two kutis of the mandal. (These are kutis in which there is no mahant. The bairagi acts as pujari, and the functions of the adhibikari and kotwal are controlled by the caste panchayat or by the zamindar and his descendants). The only kuti managed by a zamindar which was of the original fifty-two is the Pipra Kuti of Dhanuka which was established not by a zamindar alienating his own land in favour of Ram and Sita, but by a kus birta grant of 200 bighas of land by Raja Surendra Bir Bikram Shah in Samvat 1900 (1843 A.D.) to Girija Datt Misra, the then Subba governor of the old Majottri jilla, to be managed by Girija Datt Misra and his descendants.

Concerning the composition of the mandal we may note then three features. First, most of the sthans and kutis were concentrated in one locality which was later to become the town of Janakpur. Second, there was a great inequality of wealth within the mandal between those sthans possessing kus birta bitalab grants and the small kutis on raikar land. Third, in spite of the disparity of wealth within the mandal, all but one of the kutis and

sthans had one major feature in common and which constitutes one major difference between the past and the present. Except for Pipra Kutī, Dhanuka, all the sthan and kutis were managed directly by sadhus without any control by Sri Tin Sarkar or Sri Panc Sarkar, by caste councils or zamindars. And for those kutis which sadhus built on raikar land the zamindar was in most cases also a sadhu.

4.3. Internal Organization of the Mandal. There is no Sri Mahant of the Bavan Kutī aandal at present and my oldest informants cannot recall there ever having been a Sri Mahant. When I asked who the Sri Mahant was, I was told that it was the tokna (large brass cooking pot) which in a way is true since it is the rice cooked at the time of the bhandara which brings the mandal together. Nor is there an adhikari. The functions of both the Sri Mahant and adhikari are entrusted to a panchayat of mahants. In addition to the panchayat there are four rasoiya, two jalbhariya, and two kotwal. None of the above mentioned thirteen officers are elected in any formal sense of the term; i.e., by ballot or show of hands. The officer occupies his office as long as he is capable. If he should leave Janakpur for any great length of time, or should he fall ill or become feeble in old age, he will propose a successor to his office. The panchayat will discuss the merits of the candidate in an informal way and perhaps sound the opinions of some other sadhus in the mandal. If there is no reason to reject the candidate, he will be accepted. No formal ceremony marks the occasion nor must the new officer offer a bhandara. Any respected and capable sadhu is eligible for office as long as he lives in a kuti within the territory of the mandal. Wealth is not necessarily a consideration. For example, Vaidehi Saran (whose couplet marks the beginning of section 4.2) was largely responsible for expanding the fifteen day circumambulation of Janakpur from a mela involving a thousand sadhus to one involving nearly fifteen thousand sadhus and householders. He was a member of the panchayat and his influence on the mandal was totally out of proportion to the several kattha of land his disposal. But some of the seats of the panchayat may be considered reserved in the sense that several sthans always held a seat in the panchayat. These sthans were Matihani (since Matihani is located ten miles from Janakpur, the Matihani mahant might be represented on the panchayat by a sadhu living in Janakpur and loyal to the Matihani mahant's interests), Ram Mandir (until 1911 A.D.), Janki Mandir, and Ratna Sagar. In order to understand the functioning of the mandal, some mention must be made of the special authority and / or influence which these sthans with "reserved seats" possessed.

Matihani Sthan, the weathiest sthan in the mandal, is located three miles southeast of Jaleswar just within the Nepal-Bihar border and approximately ten miles from Janakpurdhan. In 1886 A.D. Raja Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah conferred unique authority upon the Matihani Sthan Mahant. Unfortunately I have not found the original lal mohar granting this authority but it is mentioned in a later lal mohar of 1913 A.D.

"We have registered the title of Man Mahant and bestowed it upon Matihani Sthan. In all Nepal, excepting Sankh Mol, Thapathali, and Pacali (three bairagi sthans located along the Bagmati river between Kathmandu and Patan) the Matihani Man Mahant is the overseer of the bairagi sect. At each bairagi kuti when the mahant dies, his disciple shall offer a bhandara and you may take up to one rupee⁷ (as fee at the time when the Man Mahant wraps the turban around the disciple's head thus conferring the mahantship upon him.). At any kuti where a bairagi should die without a disciple install your own bairagi (as mahant). Do not leave the kuti empty, ensure that the kuti fields are cultivated, place the kuti lands under the new mahant's name and collect the land revenue (malpot). If any tenant (i.e., the bairagi whom the Man Mahant has appointed as mahant) should default in payment (of malpot) you must pay from your own resources. In cases involving mahants you may collect fines and keep them. (This authority) we bestowed upon the former Matihani Mahant Lalit Das on the Thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of Asarh in Samvat 1943 (1886 A.D.).

From the point of view of the Nepalese Sarkar, the main motive behind the granting of this authority appears to be the ensurance that the collection of malpot would not be disrupted. The Matihani Man Mahant in Samvat 1951 (1894 A.D.) built Dasrath temple by Dasrath Talab in Janakpur and that became his baithak (used both in the sense of meeting place and also session, such as a session of House of Parliament). Every year he would arrive by elephant in the month of Jestha at Dasrath temple to settle disputes announce and collect fines, and then return to Matihani. Unfortunately I have found very little information concerning specific cases presented at this baithak.

The Nepalese Sarkar did not take to oversee the authority of the Matihani Man Mahant. With the wealth, private soldiers, horses and elephants of the sthan at his disposal, one may readily imagine how a mahant guided by his own personal interests could abuse this authority by forcibly "emptying" a kuti and then, because the kuti is empty, appoint a bairagi who was subservient to the Man Mahant's interests as the new mahant. Such a mahant was Deva Das, the disciple of Lalit Das, to whom is attributed the saying, "If there is my equal anywhere in Nepal, it can only be the King". His arrogance was matched by the fear he inspired in the other sadhus of the Bavan Kuti Mandal (see section 4.4.b.), and eventually led him up against the Rana Sarkar. Sri Tin Sarkar issued a warrant for his arrest and Deva Das fled to India. A few years later Deva Das disciple, Lakhnan Narayan Das, also fled to India. Convinced that the entire lineage of sadhus at Matihani had become corrupted, Prime Minister Chandra Samser in Samvat 1970 (1913 A.D.) appointed a bairagi from an entirely different spiritual clan as the new Matihani Man Mahant and issued a lal mohar which while confirming the original authority of the Man Mahant to appoint bairagis to

kutis which fall vacant, made several important changes in order to prevent future abuses of authority. First, the management of Matihani sthan's income and expenditure was placed under direct government control through the creation of the Matihani Amanat Office and settled at the Aminin Adalat court at Jaleswar rather than by the Man Mahant. Third, there is no mention of Man Mahant's right to collect either fines or the one rupee fee at the time of the installation of the new mahant. In cases involving the decease of a mahant who does not have a disciple, the Man Mahant was to pay the costs of the funeral rites from the deceased mahant's wealth. Whatever remained of that wealth after the rites were completed the Man Mahant could keep for himself. This authority remains with the Matihani Man Mahant to this day, and thus though the Bavan Kuti Mandal lacks a Sri Mahant, one important privilege of the Sri Mahant has been delegated to Matihani Sthan.

Ram Mandir was founded by Chaturbhuj Giri, a sannyasi (Saivite), but puja is performed to Ram Chandra in the temple. It is the oldest temple in Janakpur, and the only non-Vaisnavite sthan within the mandal. The Ram Mandir Mahant possessed no unique authority like the Matihani Man Mahant, but with the sthan's tax free land and 42,000 rupees tahsil it was second only to Matihani for wealth within the mandal. Every year on the occasion of Vijay Dasami, the Ram Mandir Mahant invited all the bairagis of the mandal to a bhandara at Ram Mandir. The bhandara was kacca (rice, pulse and vegetables), and since bairagis do not accept kacca food from sannyasi, the Ram Mandir Mahant would give to each bairagi mahant sufficient rice, pulse, vegetables, ghee, yoghurt, etc., which the bairagis would cook in their respective sthans and kutis. Each bairagi also received a bidai of a dhoti and one rupee. The Ram Mandir Mahant could exert influence upon the mandal by virtue of the fact that many of the bairagi kutis of the mandal were built on raikar land for which the Ram Mandir mahant was zamindar. Requests for land, disputes over land boundaries, appeal for delay in payment of malpot --- such decisions were made by the Ram Mandir mahant. Tenants who defaulted in payment of malpot were brought to Ram Mandir and made to lie in the sun, stand on one leg, or locked in a pillory until the malpot was paid. Except by the special favour of the mahant, bairagis were not exempted from such punishment. From his many graneries containing rice, wheat, pulse, etc., the mahant could supply the daily expenses of the virtually landless kutis if he so desired. Moreover as the largest landowner in the immediate area, no decision of the mandal could be effective without the approval or at least the tacit consent of the Ram Mandir mahant. Thus Ram Mandir was the second baithak of the mandal.

Ratna Sagar possessed only twelve bighas of land during the early nineteenth century. It had no mauja and hence none of the rights which the mahants with kus birta bitalab grants possessed. Ratna Sagar Sthan became important during the mahantship of Narayan Das a bairagi to whom is attributed a number of miraculous powers such as walking on water, turning water into ghee, and plucking mangos from a tree while seated in a chair one

hundred yards away. Because of Narayan Das' reputation as a yogi and the hospitality which Ratna Sagar sthan offered to all sadhus, many bairagis flocked to Ratna Sagar. As many as one hundred sadhus lived there permanently and hundreds more came from outerlying regions during the time of a mela. In one sense Ratna Sagar was the most important Vaisnavite sthan in the region, for there are literally hundreds of kutis in the Terai which trace their spiritual descent back to Narayan Das and Narayan Das' disciple, Bhagwan Das. Thus the influence of Ratna Sagar on the mandal was based not upon any special authority or rights to the land which the sthan possessed, but the respect all sadhus had of Narayan Das and the hospitality which he offered to other sadhus (conferring with it the right to revoke that hospitality), Ratna Sagar was thus the third baithak for bairagis of the mandal and in fact it was the Ratna Sagar baithak where the panchayat met and whose decisions carried the authority of the mandal. Janki Mandir was founded by Sri Sur Kisor Ji in the early eighteenth century A.D., and is the oldest bairagi sthan within Janakpur. In the introduction to Sri Mithila Bilas, a collection of poems written by Sri Sur Kisor Ji, Ram Snehi Das gives a brief account of Sri Sur Kisor Ji's arrival in Janakpur:

You (Sri Sur Kisor Ji) were the pujari of Sri Yugal Sarkar (Lord Ram and Sita) at the temple of Lohagarh in Central India and from the start you worshipped Sri Kisor Ji (the child Sita) as if she were your daughter. One day lost in reflection a powerful desire awoke in you to behold Sri Mithila Ji (Janakpur), but where was the place? There was no longer any trace of it. You became restless. Sri Kisor Ji (the idol of the Child Sita in the temple) unable to bear your agitated state of mind said, "Father, Go, Sri Mithila Ji lies in eastern Bharat between the Kosi and the Gandaki rivers, between the Ganga and the Himalaya mountains. There, wherever I become manifest to you in this form is the site of Raja Janak's (palace) at Janakpur".

When Swami Ji heard the order of his supreme Sakti daughter, his heart shone and he set out for Sri Mithila Ji. Passing by the way of Mathihani he arrived at Janakpur. He bathed at Ganga Sagar and then beheld Sri Kisor Ji together with Ram and his three brothers (at the site of Ram Mandir) and then proceeded further. There where he felt supreme bliss in his heart he stopped to rest under a neem (margosa) tree. At that very place the Sri Kisor Ji of Lohagarh appeared out of the ground before him. This then was his blissful destination. He built a small thatched hut and began to worship.

In Samvat 1784 (1727 A.D.), the Makwanpur Raja, Manik Sen, granted a mauja of land within Janakpur to the Janki Mandir, but it is only since the mahantship of Naval Kisor Das, the guru of the present mahant, that Janki Mandir let out plots of land on a

mankap basis to sadhus, householders, and merchants for residential purposes. Prior to Naval Kisor Das, nearly all of the Janki Mandir's land was fields or orchards. Thus as zamindar the Janki Mandir's mahant could not exert the kind of influence over the bairagis of the mandal as the Ram Mandir mahant. Bairagis consider the idol of Sri Kisor Ji which appeared out of the ground near the neem tree to be more than an idol; it is instead a living siddhi (manifestation) of Sri Kisor Ji herself. Disputes and accusations concerning the misconduct of a bairagi which could not be settled at the Ratna Sagar baithak were taken to Janki Mandir, where in the presence of Sri Kisor Ji the panchayat separated the truth from the falsehood ("the milk from the water") and determined the innocence or guilt of the accused party.

4.4. Regulating the internal affairs of the mandal. There is very little specific information as to what was ever discussed at the Dasrath Mandir baithak, the Ram Mandir baithak, or the Ratna Sagar baithak. One may state generally however the kinds of discussions and cases which each baithak handled. Disputes concerning the secession to a mahantship could be discussed at any baithak, but since the Man Mahant of Matihani held the ultimate authority in the respect, the dispute ultimately had to be brought before the Dasrath Mandir baithak. At this baithak the Man Mahant ruled by hak. Appeals and disputes relating to those dwelling on Ram Mandir's mauja were brought before the Ram Mandir baithak where the mahant settled them by hak. Ratna Sagar was more properly the baithak of the entire mandal, since at that baithak decisions were taken by consensus (panchayat). There were four kinds of cases which were brought before the Ratna Sagar baithak. The first involved decisions of the sect concerning the organization of melas. For example, it was a Ratna Sagar baithak which gave the right to Ram Das Acharya of Sita Kund Kuti to lead the procession of sadhus and pilgrims carrying the Mithila Bihari at the time of the circumambulation of Janakpur. When a later mahant of Sita Kund Kuti reverted to householder status, a Ratna Sagar baithak gave the right to lead the circumambulation to a disciple of Ram Das Acharya who had left Sita Kund to build his kuti in Kacauri village. This authority rests with the Kacauri Kuti to this day. The second kind of decisions made by the Ratna Sagar baithak concerned the arrangements for meetings of the mandal at a bhandara, the proposed membership of a new kuti in the mandal, the timing of a bhandara which any sadhu or householder wished to offer, and so forth. The third kind of cases brought before the Ratna Sagar baithak were when most of the sadhus of the mandal found themselves opposed on some issue to the will of the Matihani Man Mahant and in which the Ratna Sagar baithak acted as a faction to fight by force, or by appeal to the Rana Sarkar the decision of the Man Mahant. The fourth kind of cases brought before the Ratna Sagar baithak were those involving offenses against the sect, such as lying, stealing, eating meat, drinking toddy, or sexual incontinency. Three brief case studies will serve to illustrate the limits of the effectiveness of the mandal:

4.4.a. The ban on killing birds, fish, and mammals within the inner Circumambulation route of Janakpur.

What follows is a translation of the text inscribed on a long plank of wood which is kept in Ram Mandir:

From: Sri Major General Amar Jang Ku (?)r Rana on behalf of Sri 3 Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana.

To : Revenue Office Major, Amini Adalat (court) Major, saints, mahants, revenue collectors, zamindars, and commoners. On all land fields, orchards, ponds and canals within the inner circumambulation route of Janakpur it is prohibited to kill fish and to kill birds. If anyone killing fish, birds, or mammals should be seen, then bring that person along with the slaughtered animal to the thana (police post) where a fine will be imposed of 2 Nepalese rupees for every killed fish, 2 Nepalese rupees for every killed bird, and 5 Nepalese rupees for every killed mammal. Having collected the fine (the thanadar) will give one-fourth of the amount as reward to the person responsible for the arrest. The remainder of the fine will be deposited with the mahants of Ram Mandir and Janki Mandir who will retain the amounts through out the course of the year and use the money so collected to feed the fakirs who come to Janakpur on the occasion of Ram Navmi (the birthday of Lord Ram Chandra on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra). Anyone who sees, hears, or knows of someone who has killed a bird, fish, or mammal and who fails to report this to the thana will also be considered guilty and will be fined half the aforewritten amounts.

Within the five kos madhya parikrama route (the fifteen day circumambulation route), do not irrigate fields with water from sacred (tirtha) ponds. Within the inner circumambulation route of Janakpur do not wash clothes, bathe buffalo in the ponds or contaminate the water with food leavings or wash pots and pans in any of the sacred ponds. Do not urinate nor move one's bowels near the ponds. Do not perform one's abolutions in the ponds. Do not irrigate fields with water from the ponds. Anyone guilty of the above offenses, who is brought to the thana by the hakim, revenue collectors, zamindar, will be fined according to the legal code.

One copy of the above written kasth patra will be kept at Ram Mandir and one copy at Janki Mandir. Samvat 1933, the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of Magh".

There is no mention of the Bavan Kuti Mandal in this kasth patra, although there is no doubt that the bairagis of Janakpur were the party which appealed to the Sri 3 Sarkar to give legal status to the internal rules of the sect which forbid the slaying and eating of meat, fowl and fish. I cite this document because in all probability it was sometime around 1933 Samvat (1877 A.D.) that the mandal was formed. From what I have learned, the driving force of the mandal was Narayan Das and by Samvat 1933 Narayan Das was the mahant of Ratna Sagar. Moreover, it would have been impossible for the mandal to be effective without the full or at least quasi-membership of the Ram Mandir mahant. The sannyasis of the region have traditionally been meat-eaters, however. That the sannyasis of Ram Mandir (probably during the mahantship of Visveswar Giri) abandoned their meat-eating habits and fell in line with the bairagi rule concerning the abstention of eating meat, suggests that at this time there was a sufficient underlying unity of all the sadhus of Janakpur regardless of sect, which would permit the establishment of the mandal. Perhaps during the mahantship of his successor, Iswar Giri, the offering of blood (slaughtered goats) to the Raj Devi within Ram Mandir on Durgastmi (8th day of bright footnight of Asam) was stopped. The Raj Devi was offered laddu (a kind sweet) instead.

4.4.b. Dispute over the succession to the mahantship of Sita Kund Kuti. That there was an underlying spiritual unity to the Bavan Kuti Mandal does not imply that the mandal was devoid of factions. There is also unity in opposition, and during the mahantship of Deva Das at Matihani Sthan a majority of the sadhus in Janakpur were united under the leadership of Narayan Das of Ratna Sagar to oppose the will of the Matihani Man Mahant. The Ratna Sagar baithak by itself, however, was not able to control the activities of Deva Das. During this time, high ranked Ranas often travelled through the Terai on tours of inspection. At Janakpur they established their camp on Ranga Bhūmi, just northwest of Janki Mandir. The bairagis first gathered at Ratna Sagar where they prepared flower malas and prasad to offer to the Ranas and then they walked in a group to Ranga Bhūmi. On such occasions the sadhus individually or on behalf of the mandal appealed to the Ranas to settle a dispute, convert their raikar land to tax-free birta land, and so forth.

The dispute concerning the succession to the mahantship to Sita Kund kuti is noted in a lengthy binti patra entreaty which Mahavir Das of Sita Kund submitted to an unnamed Rana while on tour in the Terai. The binti patra presents the case of the plaintiff only and one cannot be assured that the material is unbiased. But from a later sanad letter of appointment issued in the name Mithila Das it is clear that the Rana settled the dispute in the favour of Mahavir Das, thus suggesting there is an element of truth to the allegations made in the entreaty. The binti patra is lengthy, therefore I shall only summarize its contents. In the third generation of mahants at Sita Kund Janki Das was the mahant

and he had a disciple, Mahavir Das by name, who was only a child. In Samvat 1938 (1881 A.D.) Janki Das wanted to leave on a long pilgrimage and being uncertain of his eventual return he invited another bairagi, Kamla Saran to assume the duties of the mahant until his disciple, Mahavir Das, came of age. Kamala Saran agreed to this. An agreement was signed to this effect by all three parties and one copy was sent to Sri 3 Sarkar (most likely to the Goswara at Jaleswar). On the month of Bhadra 1952 (1895 A.D.) Kamala Saran died and Mahavir Das performed the final rites. At that time a travelling bairagi named Thakur Das who came from somewhere in Bhojpur, Bihar arrived at Sita Kund and noted that the Mahant Kamla Saran had recently died and that Kamala Saran had no disciple. Thakur Das went to Matihani and allegedly proposed to the then Man Mahant Deva Das, "since Kamala Saran had no disciple, take the kuti under your control and place me there as mahant. As long as I am alive I will remain mahant. You may claim the kuti and appoint whom you like upon my death. Even if I should have a disciple, he will have no claim to the kuti". Deva Das accompanied by his private soldiers came to Janakpur and ordered Mahavir Das out of the kuti. Mahavir Das from inside the kuti read aloud the agreement signed by him, Kamala Saran, and his guru Janki Das. Deva Das, however, refused to accept the document. He said, "If you do not come out of the kuti, I shall cut you down with my sword". Mahavir Das stepped out of the kuti and Deva Das's soldiers occupied the kuti and seized the fields, granery, and livestock. Deva Das then installed Thakur Das as mahant. In the binti patra, Mahavir Das notes at the end the documents submitted in support of his case and writes that except for those sadhus of Matihani's faction, the sadhus of the Bavan kuti mandal will support my testimony. Notable among the three names listed as being in the Matihani faction is Hari Bhajan Das, the mahant of Janki Mandir. In the settlement Sri 3 Sarkar drove Thakur Das from the kuti and appointed Mahavir Das as mahant.

4.4.c. The first mairam (female sadhu) to live in Janakpur. A man of Keyot (ferryman) caste lived in the village of Lotwa about twelve miles southeast of Janakpur along with his wife who was also a dhami and who could summon by mantra the goddess Bhagawati. After several years of marriage, the Keyot became a bairagi and was given the name Janki Das. His wife became his disciple and lived in the kuti with him as a celibate mairam. Ram Das was Rajput by caste and was initiated by Narayan Das, the mahant of Ratna Sagar sthan. He lived in a thatched hut by Ratna Sagar and took his meals daily at the sthan, Ram Das was also on friendly terms with Visweswar Giri, the Mahant of Ram Mandir, and the two of them often spent the late afternoon chatting and smoking cilams at Ram Mandir. Prior to coming to Janakpur Ram Das had passed some time at Lotwa, and thus knew Janki Das. When Janki Das died, his male disciple inherited the kuti and his wife came to Janakpur. She knew of Ram Das through her deceased husband, and, having nowhere to stay, she approached Ram Das who offered her hospitality. When Narayan Das heard of this he became furious and had everything

looted from Ram Das' kuti. When the mairam refused to be intimidated, he drove both of them off Ratna Sagar land and told Ram Das that "No sadhu of my khandan [lineage] will live with a mairam". Henceforth Ram Das and the mairam were denied fire, water, and cooked and uncooked food from Ratna Sagar. They were not permitted to worship at Ratna Sagar temple, nor bathe in Ratna Sagar pond, nor use any of the footpaths which cross Ratna Sagar land.

Ram Das went to Ram Mandir where Visheswar Giri offered puri and rice pudding. When the very next day Ram Das returned to Ram Mandir to eat puri, Visheswar Giri asked him why he was no longer eating at Ratna Sagar. Ram Das related what happened. Ram Mandir held raikar land only two hundred yards south of Ratna Sagar. The following day at dawn, Visheswar Giri riding atop an elephant and preceded by bodyguards and followed by craftsmen and servants and several bullock carts of bamboo, thatch, grain, and tools, arrived at the plot of ground and within one day built a new kuti and stocked it with supplies. Ram Das and the mairam moved in.

Later that year, there was a cholera epidemic in the villages just west of Janakpur. As soon as the villagers hauled off one dead body for cremation by the Dudhmati, there was another dead body in the village waiting to be carried away. One villager recalled that the wife of Janki Das was a dhami who had power to summon Bhagawati (cholera is caused by the goddess Bhagawati in a fit of anger or hunger). The villager found Janki Das' wife in Janakpur and asked her to come to his village. The mairam did so and by mantra summoned Bhagawati and told her that she had fed enough on the lives of these villagers and it was time to move on somewhere else. From that moment, no one else died of cholera in the village and those who had fever became well. The villagers wanted to express their gratitude to the mairam and the mairam suggested that they offer a bhandara to the Bavan Kuti Mandal. The bhandara was arranged and the date fixed. Narayan Das refused to accept the invitation. The day before the bhandara, the mairam went to the pond at Ratna Sagar and bathed in the water. Narayan Das saw her from the temple and was furious. He ordered her to leave the pond at once. The mairam replied that no one named Narayan Das has the right to order anyone off land which belongs to the goddess Sita. Leaving the pond the mairam shouted in a loud voice for all to hear, "If Narayan Das does not come to the bhandara tomorrow, then at the time when the food is served we shall all see the smoke of his funeral pyre on the banks of Ratna Sagar". Hearing this, Narayan Das became afraid knowing that the mairam could invoke has control the goddess Bhagawati. The following day, Narayan Das took food at the bhandara. Thus Ram Das and the mairam were accepted as members of the mandal.

At the time this incident occurred nearly eighty years ago, there were only two other female sadhus living in Janakpur and in both cases they were living with their husband who was a sadhu. Most celibate sadhus consider this to be a more inferior state of

renouncement than if the man were to break the marriage bond, but they also recognize the obligations a man accepts at the time of marriage to provide for the welfare of his wife. It is not an offense against the sect if a pious householder and his wife receive initiation into the sect and become sadhus practising celibacy in marriage. Nor is it an offense if a bairagi reverts to householder status with his guru's permission. For example, occasionally a bairagi's brothers may die without male issue, in which case the bairagi's natal family would urge him to marry and produce a son in order to keep the lineage alive. Any bairagi, however, who takes the vow of celibacy and then begins to live with a mairam without his guru's permission commits a crime against the sect, for it is assumed that he has broken the vow of celibacy. In fact, accusations of sexual incontinency are rarely ever proved. It is considered impossible for a man and woman who are not kin to live together and not engage in sexual intercourse. In cases of sexual incontinency, the sadhu is usually proved guilty by association. In the Ramayana, for example, Ravana, the demon king, abducted Sita and removed her to his kingdom at Lanka. Many months later Ram and Laksman arrived with an army of monkeys killed Ravana in battle, and rescued Sita from the asoka grove where she was kept prisoner. But before Ram accepted Sita back as his wife, he made her pass the fire ordeal in order to prove that she had remained virtuous during the time she remained under Ravana's custody. Even the successful passing of the fire ordeal did not put to rest the suspicions of some of the residents of Ayodhya (Ram's capital). These suspicions eventually created unrest in Ram's kingdom and in order to maintain rule Ram was reluctantly obliged to exile Sita to the jungle.

Offenses against the sect, such as lying, stealing, eating meat, or sexual incontinency, were settled by the Ratna Sagar baithak. Although a sadhu might go to Janki Mandir to proclaim his innocence before Sri Kisorji Ji. The punishment usually meted out was the denial of food, fire, and water from all kutis and sthans of the mandal until one offered a bhandara to the mandal. Concerning cases of sexual incontinency bairagis were also punished by having their hair shaved, head smeared with cow dung, their loincloth untied and used to bind their hands behind their back, and then they would be beaten and taken on a "tour" of Janakpur. I was told that if a sadhu had landed wealth, he would also be fined 55 rupees, but I never heard of such a case. Nor, in fact, did I ever hear of any case in which the baithak met to discuss an accusation of sexual incontinency. Such a situation was so volatile, that punishment was meted out before the baithak could assemble. As is illustrated by the case of Ram Das and the mairam, Narayan Das had their kuti looted instead of calling the panchayat. And even if he would have called the panchayat, the excommunication of Ram Das from the mandal would have been ineffective because such a decision lacked the consent of the largest land holder in the town, the Ram Mandir Mahant.

4.5. Factors contributing to the decline of the Bavan Kuti Mandal. Rather than describe how the situation has changed in Janakpur during the past eighty years, I shall mention only a few important differences between the Janakpur of then and now, and then I shall relate these change to the present situation of the mandal. First, since Samwat 1968 (1911 A.D.) during the time of Prime Minister Gandra Samser, Sri Tin Sarkar gradually assumed direct control over the income and expenditure of the wealthy sthans. The reason for this was to prevent the mismanagement of temple funds thereby maximizing the revenue from the temple raikar lands which accrued to the Guthi Mal Office at Kathmandu and which the Ranas used to build schools, hospitals, bridges, resthouses and such projects for the welfare of the general public⁸. (Untouchables were not always considered members of the "general public". Resthouses and schools were often built for the use of Twice-born Hindus only). This policy of gradually taking over the management of sthans which were granted land by the King has been continued by Sri Panc Sarkar since the overthrow of the Rana regime. The Guthi Mal Office has been replaced by the Guthisansthan, which allocates sufficient funds to the sthans for their daily management, for the worship of the deity in the temple, and there are special allocations for religious festivals. All such items of expenditure from the salary of the mahant down to the purchase of chilli peppers in the bazar are fixed according to a schedule of expenses issued by the Guthisansthan. On the one hand, this policy prevented potentially corrupt mahants from deriving personal benefit from the temple wealth. For example, such a mahant might use the income from temple lands to purchase land in the name of his uterine brother. On the other hand, this policy crippled the activities of a potentially good mahant, who might use such income to attract sadhus to Janakpur and to strengthen the mandal through the offering of hospitality. Since some time now, the bhandara which the Ram Mandir mahant offered to the Bavan kuti mandal on the occasion of Vijay Dasami has ceased to exist, and the Ram Mandir mahant at present could not patronize another sadhu in the way Viseswar Giri patronized Ram Das.

Most sadhus, unlike householders, take pride in their independence, and if they are not independent they bemoan their situation. A householder would find it a matter of personal prestige and power to be in the employ of the state, but sadhus do not. Sadhus are their own Raja, and hence many sadhus resent or belittle the control which the Guthisansthan exercises over the mahants of the sthans. When I ask sadhus about the mahant of a sthan managed by the the Guthisansthan, a typical reply would be: "He is not a mahant; he is a nokar (servant)"⁹. The first sthan in the region of which Sri 3 Sarkar took over the management was Ram Mandir. Rather than have his sthan managed by the government and somewhat fearing the Rana government's motives the then mahant, Iswar Giri, fled to India taking a considerable amount of Ram Mandir's wealth with him. For the Bavan Kuti mandal

the result of this was that government administrators rather than a sadhu collected the revenue from those sadhus on Ram Mandir's raikar land. Sri 3 Sarkar appointed a sannyasi from Narphora Sthan (several miles west of Jaleswar in Muzzafarpur jilla, Bihar) as the new Ram Mandir mahant. The sannyasi of this sthan are meat-eaters, so that spiritual unity which existed for some time between the sannyasis of Ram Mandir and the bairagis was broken. Since then the Ram Mandir mahant has had little influence over the mandal.

Another reason for the decline of the mandal is that eighty years ago, a tenant on raikar land delivered to the zamindar of his mauja approximately ten maund of paddy (the equivalent of ten rupees) per bigha of land as land revenue (malpot). The zamindar retained 1/16th of the ten maund as his commission and forwarded the remainder onto the Sarkar Mal office. Ten maund of paddy was the equivalent of approximately one-third to one-half of the paddy harvest. Since then, the government commuted payment of malpot in kind to payment in cash, but the price of paddy in the bazar increased disproportionately to the increase in land revenue stipulated in cash. Today, on land the tenant pays 51 rupees per bigha as malpot, and the value of ten maund of rice in the bazar is approximately 1300 rupees. This has resulted in a process of subinfeudation whereby the tenant who was previously obliged to cultivate the land himself, can now sublet his land to another under the batai system, whereby the actual cultivator retains one-half of all produce of the land and delivers one-half to the tenant. The tenant from his half-share pays the malpot to the government and lives quite comfortably on the remainder¹⁰. Eighty years ago a bairagi could not take out raikar land for agricultural purposes because bairagis are not supposed to engage in agricultural work. Nor could a bairagi take out raikar land with the intention of subletting it to a cultivator under the batai system because the cultivator would claim one-half of the harvest and the zamindar would claim between one-third and one-half of the paddy harvest leaving the bairagi with practically nothing. In those days, bairagis were obliged either to live in a sthan or they could take small plot (about one kattha) of raikar land on which to build a kuti and then depend on alms to pay the malpot. They maintained themselves by begging from landowners or or by depending on the hospitality of the sthans possessing tax-free land. Eighty years ago, at Ratna Sagar and Janki Mandir, several hundred sadhus would gather daily to take their meal. Thus, in the case of the misconduct of a bairagi, the revoking of fire, food, and water by the sthans of the mandal was more than an idle threat. A bairagi ostracized from the mandal was more or less obliged to leave the town. Nowadays most kutis have their own raikar land which they let out on the batai system and thus these kutis are not dependent on the sthans.

Many of the new kutis of Janakpurdham are caste kutis and family kutis in which a caste council or a family manages the kuti income and expenditure. These kutis were built primarily as places of worship for members of the caste or the family concerned. As householders, they are less sensitive to the rules and institutions of the bairagi sect and unwilling to bear expenses which lay in the sadhu's interests rather than their own. A recent incident illustrates this point. Some time ago a thief stole an asth dhātu mūrti (an idol made of an alloy of eight different metals) from a family kuti. The thief removed the silver necklace and bangles from the idol and then, tossing the idol into a nearby pond, made his escape in the night. A day later a child bathing in the pond came upon the idol and gave it to the police who returned it the next day to the pujari of the kuti. The rules are quite specific in this case. An asth dhātu mūrti of a deity becomes that deity in a Vedic rite called prān pratistha in which a purohit installs the prān (soul of the deity) in the murti. If the deity is not fed food during a period of twenty-four hours, the prān leaves the idol, and the deity "dies". In such cases a purohit must be called to reinstall the prān in the mūrti. Until that happens the mūrti is merely a piece of metal. At the installation of the prān in the murti the sadhu must offer a bhandara to the mandal. It should be mentioned that many sadhus develop a very personal attachment to the idol which they worship. For those sadhus who are well advanced in their spiritual discipline, the idol comes to life in their presence and smiles upon them or speaks to them. Such sadhus only eat the prasād of their idol, and there is no point in offering food to a 'dead' (whose prān has departed) idol. So the pujari of this family kuti had not eaten cooked food for three days since the time of the theft. When the police returned the idol to the kuti, the pujari went to the householder who owned the kuti and told him the idol would require new clothes, a prān pratistha ceremony, and bhandara to the mandal. The householder saw no point to the bhandara, but did agree to purchase new clothes and call the purohit for the prān pratistha. The householder arrived at the kuti on the following day and recalcitrated even on the prān pratistha. He bought ten rupees of new clothes and told the pujari to dress the idol and put it back in the temple. The pujari, by begging from other sadhus, put together enough money to have the prān pratistha and then he returned the idol to the temple.

A fourth reason for the decline of the mandal is its increase in size. The mandal usually meets at a bhandara and today a kacca bhandara to feed the entire mandal requires 480 kilograms of rice, 280 kilograms of vegetables, and 120 kilograms of pulse. Adding to this the bidai of money and dhoti, a bhandara will cost the host at least 5000 rupees. There are very few sadhus in Janakpur who can afford to put together such a bhandara. Previously the Bavan Kuti mandal used to have highly differentiated rules for the bhandara each with its particular menu based upon

the kind of membership (solah ānnā, barah ānnā, ath ānnā) which the particular kuti held. These rules no longer exist today. Thus the mandal as a whole, meets rarely. Many new kutis in Janakpur have not even offered a bhandara to gain formal membership within the mandal.

A final reason is that one hundred years ago, only sadhus lived in Janakpur plus the servants, scribes, purohits, etc., who served in the temples and the agricultural labourers who tilled the temple land. There was no industry, there was abundant land, and there was no idea of socio-economic development. One could accumulate surplus wealth if one had land, but there were very few opportunities for investing that wealth. At present Janakpur is the rapidly growing capital of Dhanusa jilla and an important market centre for the eastern Terai and northern Bihar. The residential area of the town has swelled and secular interests (commercial, administrative, and industrial) predominate over the religious interests. Since sadhus controlled all the land within the present boundaries of the town, the recent socio-economic development of the town could only occur at the expense of the control which sadhus had over the land. For example, the mahant of Ratna Sagar, Narayan Das, (4.4.c) could deny Ram Das and the mairam the right to bathe in the pond beside Ratna Sagar sthan. The ponds of Janakpur belong to the sthans upon whose land they lie. But the sthans property is now managed by the Guthisansthan which has its royal charter. Meanwhile in 1962 by royal order the town pancayat was created which also was granted authority over the land and ponds of the town. The shopkeepers of the small market stalls which line some of the ponds pay land rent to the town pancayat rather than to the sthan or to the Guthisansthan. Until there is some court ruling or national law passed one cannot really say who "owns" the ponds, but the multiplicity of interests are such, that no mahant of a sthan could deny access to anyone, sadhu or householder, to a pond on his property.

4.6. The Bavan Kuti Mandal at present. Returning to the topic of section 4.4, regulating the internal affairs of the mandal, one may compare the past situation with the present with regard to the three baithaks and to the kinds of cases brought before the baithak. Since Samvat 1968 (1911 A.D.) the Ram Mandir baithak does not exist. The Ram Mandir mahant presided over that baithak by virtue of his rights to the land. It was precisely that right which Sri 3 Sarkar removed from the mahant by creating the Amanat Managery Office (rather they recognized Ram Mandir's rights to the land, but took away the right to manage that land). Tenants who defaulted in their payment were punished by the Managery Office (sadhus were not exempt from such punishment), and disputes concerning the land were settled by the Managery Office or by the court. Moreover with the arrival of sannyasi from Narphora Sthan

who ate meat, most bairagis ceased to respect the Ram Mandir Mahant, and thus the Ram Mandir Mahant exerted little, if any, personal or moral influence over the mandal.

Since Samvat 1970 (1913 A.D.) the Dasrath Mandir baithak has ceased to exist. The Matihani Man Mahant still possesses the authority to take over kutis which fall vacant but if there is any dispute, such as a sadhu claiming that he is the deceased mahant's disciple and thus the kuti is not vacant, the authority to settle this dispute resides with the court and not with the Man Mahant at the Dasrath Mandir baithak.

The Ratna Sagar baithak still exists, or rather the memory of the baithak exists because the tokna of the mandal is stored at Ratna Sagar. Any sadhu who wants to offer a bhandara must go to Ratna Sagar to settle the date with the pancayat and to borrow the tokna. But I have not heard of any disputes in recent years being brought before the Ratna Sagar baithak. Previously the Ratna Sagar baithak gave the authority to carry the Mithila Bihari murti and lead the madhya parikrama to Ram Das Acarya of Sita Kund Kuti and later the baithak withdrew that right and gave it to Kacauri Kuti. The mahant of a kuti in Janakpur recently tried to acquire the right to lead the parikrama with the Mithila Bihari murti, but he launched his attempt (which proved unsuccessful) through the court rather than through the Ratna Sagar baithak. Since the death of Ram Jiwan Das of Birarak Kuti and Bhagawan Das of Ratna Sagar I have not heard of any cases involving sexual incontinency, drinking of liquor, etc., brought before the baithak. It has been shown (4.4.6.) that in the past when the mandal as a group proved ineffective in regulating such matters all that could be done was for the mahants individually to regulate the matter. At present these offenses are self-regulated rather than mandal regulated.

Concerning the officers of the mandal there are still five panc, four rasoiya, two jalbhariya, and two kotwal. Their functions are more or less limited to the arrangement and preparation of a bhandara. Within the past two years there have been several bhandaras on the occasions of the deaths of a mahant. The Kumhar (potter) caste council offered a bhandara after sponsoring a Ramarca puja at their caste kuti. The Sri Mahant of the Sirsiya mandal who traces his spiritual descent back to Ratna Sagar, held a nine day sacrifice and invited the Bavan Kuti Mandal. But in view of the great expense involved in these bhandaras, the host is no longer obliged to invite the entire mandal. He informs the pancayat as to how much rice and money he has at his disposal and then the pancayat decides how many invitations to offer and who shall be invited. Poor kutis, however, do not even bother with this procedure. The quantity of rice in their granery could never even begin to fill the twelve paseri (60 kg.) tokna of the mandal so there is no point in going to Ratna Sagar. The

disciple of the deceased mahant will put together as much rice and dal as he can and then will prepare a bhandara and invite the neighbouring kutis.

In sum, what one might call the honorary functions of the mandal still exist although these functions are constrained by the financial resources of the sthans and kutis. The regulatory functions of the mandal, however, have more or less ceased to exist. Disputes concerning the succession of a mahantship usually go directly to the courts in the case of kutis and to the Guthisansthan in the case of the sthans without prior attempt at a settlement by the Ratna Sagar baithak. If a sadhu commits a crime against the sect, such as theft, which is also a civil offense, than redress may be sought through the courts. The mandal as a group is powerless to regulate offenses against the sect which are not a civil offenses. Each mahant in his turn will regulate the matter himself by ostracizing the fallen bairagi from his kuti.

GLOSSARY

Certain words, such as guru, nawab, dhoti, pancayat, etc., should be familiar to English readers. Otherwise all Nepali, Hindi, or Sanskrit words have been defined and written with proper diacritical marks at their first appearance within the essay. In order to refresh one's memory, words used more than once are defined once more below:

adālat	district court of justice
adhikārī	officer of the sthan, mandal, or khalsa who is responsible for managing the temple estate and executing the orders of the mahant.
akśat	a mixture of rice, barley, and sesame seeds which is a symbol of blessing.
ānā	a coin whose value is 1/16th of the old rupee and which is used to express fractions. For example, someone recovering from an infected wound might say "four ana of the wound remains" meaning that all but 4/16th of the wound has healed.
baithak	meeting place; session, as in session of the House of Parliament.
bairāgi	desireless; epithet of a Vaisnavite sadhu.
bastra dhārī	a sadhu who wears clothes.
baṭāī	system of land tenure in which the cultivator pays one-half of all produce of the land to the owner. All costs of production are born by the cultivator. The land revenue, however, is paid by the owner to the state.

bhaṇḍāra	feast
bidāī	gift given by the host to the guest at the time of the guest's parting.
bighā	unit of land measurement in the Terai which is equivalent to 1.6 acres.
bintī patra	entreaty submitted by plaintiff to the court or to anyone whose authority it is to settle the dispute.
birtā	rights to land granted by the Raja or Rana to nobles, Brahmans, and mahants.
candan	sandlewood or certain types of claylike earth the paste of which is used by bairagis to apply the tilak to their forehead.
cilam	clay pipe
dhām	a word meaning place, dwelling, etc. For sadhus there are four dhams each lying in one of the four cardinal directions: Jagannath Puri in the east (Orissa), Rameswaram in the south (Tamil Nadu), Dwarka in the west (Gujarat), and Bhadrinath in the north (Uttar Pradesh). It is the goal of all sadhus, both bairagis and sannyasis, to make a pilgrimage to the four dhams at least once in their lifetime.
ḍūb	a kind of grass used on auspicious occasions as a symbol of blessing.
gādi, gaddī	throne
gurū dwāra	the sthan where one's guru dwells; i.e., where a bairagi was initiated into the sect.
gurū bhāī	sadhus initiated by the same guru.
hak	authority, right, claim.
jalbhariyā	officer of the sthan, mandal, or khalsa whose duty it is to fetch water for drinking and cooking purposes.
kaccā	raw, unripe, unpaved, imperfect.
kāṣṭha patra	inscription on wood.
kaṭṭhā	unit of land easurement equivalent to 1/20th of a bigha.
khālsā	used instead of sthan to refer to the organization of a group of travelling bairagis. Like the sthan the khalsa also has its mahant, adhikari, pujari, etc.
koṭwāl	messenger, temple guard.

koṭhārī	keeper of the storeroom and granery.
kutī	a cottage or hermitage, a small temple often no more than a simple thatched hut in which one or two bairagis dwell.
lāl mohar	the royal seal affixed on orders eissued by the king; such an order as issued by the king.
lāthī	a stout bamboo staff used to drive cattle, knock fruit from trees, defend oneself, etc.
mahant	the temporal and spiritual head of a sthan or khalsa.
mahātyāgī	"great renouncers" bairagis who renounce one step further from the tyagi stage. They wear no cotton clothing (a loincloth of the inner bark of banana tree is used instead) and do not live in any fixed place. Instead they pertetually travel across India and Nepal in groups called khalsa.
mālpot	land revenue paid to the state
mandir	temple
maujā	village as a revenue or administrative unit.
maund	a measure of weight equivalent to forty ser, or approximatelly forty kilograms.
pakkā	refined, ripe, paved, perfect.
parikrama	circumambulation.
prāṇ	one of the ten vital airs within the body and what gives life to all sentient beings. It is the pran which departs at the moment of death.
prāṇ pratiṣṭhā	the Vedic rite in which a purohit installs the pran in the idol of a deity.
prasād	food leavings of the deity which are eaten by sadhus and devotees.
pūjā	worship ceremony.
pūjārī	the officer of the sthan or khalsa who performs the worship ceremony and who offers cooked food to the deity.
raikar	a kind of land tenure in which the king retained the title to the land but rented out the right to cultivation to tenant farmers upon payment of malpot
rasoiyā	a cook
sādhu	anyone who follows a spiritual discipline [sadhna]; an ascetic.

sanad	a letter issued by Sri Panc or Sri Tin Sarkar appointing a sadhu to the mahantship of a sthan.
Śrī Pāñc Sarkār	the government of His Majesty the King.
Śrī Tīn Sarkār	the government of Nepal during the years when the Ranas usurped political power from the King.
sthān	place; the organization of a group of sadhus who live in a fixed place; a monastery.
supārī	betel nut.
ṭahlū	servant who assists in the kitchen.
tahsil	land revenue.
tilak	the forehead markings of a sadhu.
ṭoknā	a large brass cooking pot.
tulsī	the basil plant sacred to Vaisnavites.
tyāgī	a bairagi who has renounced the bastra dhari stage. He wears only a small cotton loincloth, smears his body with ashes, and keeps long matted hair.
varṇa	colour, class; the division of Hindu society into four categories based on relative purity; viz., Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra.

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FOOTNOTES

1/ In fact, the functions of the mahant and the adhikari vary according to the personality of the mahant. Some mahants take a great interest in the management of the temple lands in which case the adhikari is an officer with very few responsibilities. Other mahants pass their entire day in meditation, worship, and the reading of sacred texts in which case he abdicates entirely the task of managing the temple to the adhikari.

2/ The situation is not quite so straightforward as this because both bairagis and householders continue to observe the caste rules of commensuality. Neither a householder of Brahman caste nor a bairagi of Brahman birth will accept kacca food (rice for example) from a bairagi of barber caste birth. On the other hand, no bairagi regardless of his caste at birth will accept kacca food from a householder regardless of the householder's caste. Even if a Brahman householder offers a bhandara to the mandal, the Sri Mahant will send the mandal rasoia to cook the food. The situation is thus ambivalent. As an act of merit such a bhandara implies the bairagi's superior purity yet a Brahman will not accept kacca food from a sudra bairagi because of the bairagi's inferior purity.

This situation exists primarily with the Vaisnavites for they admit householders of all castes into the sect. In principle sannyasi and Kanphata Yogis only accept twice-born Hindus into the sect and so I have been told they do not observe caste rules of commensuality within the sect. A fallen bairagi returns to his caste at birth. A fallen sannyasi or Kanphata Yogi is relegated to a caste called sannyasi and yogi and is treated as a pure Sudra by householders.

3/ Even though a bairagi renounces his family ties if he should offer a bhandara, his parents and relatives will be hailed by the assembled sadhus.

4/ There are a number of different forehead markings (tilak) within the sect. The four kinds of tilak most commonly found are lal sri, laskri, bendi, and caturbhuj. A bairagi acquires the same tilak as of his guru. If a sadhu should become the mahant of a kuti which is not his guru dwara it may be possible therefore that his tilak is of a different kind than the deceased mahant in which case the Sri Mahant applies the deceased mahant's tilak to the new mahant's forehead.

5/ I heard of three such situations as this. This ceremony happened in only one of them. In the other two the sadhus dispensed with any such ceremony. These two kutis are both located in Janakpur and the sadhu from outside who assumed the mahantship was too poor to offer a bhandara to the mandal. Thus there was no installation ceremony either.

6/ Makwanpur is located approximately half-way between Kathmandu and the Terai, west of the Bagmati and east of Hitauda.

7/ In 1886 A.D. one rupee could buy one maund of rice. In 1975 A.D. 130 rupees will buy one maund of rice.

8/ Regmi 1968: 77 - 78.

9/ The pujari of Ram Mandir reports to work like any other government fonctionnaire signing the daily book at the Guthi office before going to the temple.

10/ Anyone familiar with Mahesh Regmi's exhaustive study of land tenure and taxation in Nepal will be aware of my debt to him here.

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criminal cases and their punishments before and during the period of jang bahadur

Krishna Kant Adikhari

Introduction

There is no dependable record of the development of the Nepali legal system prior to the fourteenth century A.D. The laws shown in the inscriptions of the ancient Hindu rulers have not proved to be very important as judicial works which could have influenced the later legal systems of Nepal¹. The first influential proponent of judicial law in Nepal was Jayasthiti Malla. Jayasthiti Malla, as stated in the chronicle (vamsavali), was a wise ruler who made various social and religious laws². He divided the people into castes and made regulations setting out caste behavior and inter-caste relationships. "Such laws" as stated in the vamsavali, "were formally in existence, but having fallen into disuse through lapse of time were again compiled from the Shastras and brought into use"³. He also made significant changes in regards to criminal punishment. The vamsavali mentions that, "In former regions, criminals were allowed to escape with blows and reprimands, but this Raja imposed fines according to the degree of the crimes"⁴. The laws introduced by Jayasthiti Malla were based on the Shastras (religious scriptures) and these laws had great impact on the laws of the later Malla and Shah kings.

Another king credited with introducing social regulations was Ram Shah, the ruler of Gorkha. Twenty-six regulations pronounced by this king have already been found⁵. He was a Hindu ruler, like Jayasthiti Malla and he too followed many of the customary laws which prevailed among the various sections of the population at that time. Even with the political unification of Nepal in 1769 A.D., the basic judicial system of Nepal remained strongly based on the Shashtra save only for a few variations suiting the needs of the time.

Brian Hodgson, the third British Resident in Nepal (1833-1843 A.D.) rendered a service to Nepal by putting the judicial system of the time into written form. His papers, both published and unpublished, provide us with a fairly reliable base for comparing the judicial practices of the period with those of the government of Jang Bahadur. It must be noted that although Hodgson's papers on the legal system were not based on official records, nevertheless they have withstood test and verification through comparison with available orders issued by the central government to district administrators as will be cited below.

Jang Bahadur (1846-1876 A.D.) occupies a unique position in the legal history of Nepal. It was he that gave politically united Nepal its first written legal code (Ain) which covered both civil and criminal cases. His predecessors, Jayasthiti Malla and

Ram Shah, both produced social and judicial legislation meant for their respective tiny states. Jang Bahadur's Ain, on the other hand, was meant to be applied to the whole of Nepal.

The Ain dealt not only with civil and criminal matters, but dealt also with administrative procedures and the conduct of civil servants as well. It contains regulations for the management of revenue administration, land surveys, distribution of land to the landless and relations of landlords to tenants. It includes detailed provisions regarding social conduct such as caste, marriage, relations between husbands and wives, family property and its partition, sati (the immolation of a wife on a husband's funeral pyre), slavery and gambling, to mention a few. Finally, the Ain is a piece of literature which presents a faithful picture of Nepalese life in the nineteenth century.

 The Ain came into effect on Pausa Sudi 7, Raj 5, V.S. 1910 (January 5, 1854). It is a handwritten document, which has since been published by the Ministry of Law and Justice, Nepal. The published edition, however, is of a later version containing certain amended provisions dating from 1854 to 1866 A.D.

The published version of the Ain is entitled Sri 5 Surendra Vikram Shah Devko Shasan Kalma Baneko Muluki Ain, but the word muluki does not appear in any of the original copies of the Ain. All of the original copies or amended versions available are simply called Ain. Both in the preamble and on the title page of the original, it is written simply as Ain, not Muluki Ain and this name is maintained in all the amended copies which appeared during the period of Jang Bahadur. The word muluki seems to have been added by his successors. For the purpose of this study, the published version has been consulted, but cited simply as Ain maintaining the original title.

The Ain has three important features. First, unlike previous judicial codes, it was less technical. It facilitated the quick disposal of cases according to its provisions, since everything was clearly laid out and every aspect covered. It was no longer necessary to consult the Shastras (a defect of the earlier systems, which made frequent consultation of those texts necessary whenever a new case involving breach of caste or interest regulation turned up) for clarification on legal points⁶. In the second place, the Ain provided Nepal with a uniform system of administration particularly in relation to revenue and judicial concerns. Finally the Ain became a source for all future legislation. It laid the foundation for the practice of written enactments relevant to the needs of the time. The Ain in spite of some limitations and changes continued to be the chief legal code up until 1962 A.D. Even the present legal code, the Muluki Ain, which has been hailed as the most progressive, has incorporated certain features of the Ain of 1854 A.D. Due to a lack of space here, a comparative study

of the Ain of 1854 and the present Muluki Ain cannot be given⁷, but the dates of the major amendments made since the Ain of 1854 are presented as follows: 1862 (1919 V.S.), 1872 (1929 V.S.), 1888 (1945 V.S.), 1904 (1961 V.S.) 1910 (1967 V.S.), 1918 (1975 V.S.), 1923 (1980 V.S.), 1927-28 (1984-85 V.S.), 1930 (1987 V.S.), 1933 (1990 V.S.), 1942 (1999 V.S.) 1947-48 (2003-4 V.S.) and 1955 (2012 V.S.). The new Muluki Ain was introduced in 1962 A.D.

Several researchers have considered the legal system and judicial administration of Nepal during the last few years. In addition to the work of Brian Hodgson, cited above, several references on the legal system of the Ranas, including Jang Bahadur, can be found in works by European writers, particularly works by British authors. A controversy has developed, since some of these writers attribute certain aspects of the criminal code in the Ain as being due to the modernizing influence of the British legal system on Jang Bahadur as a result of his visit to England prior to the codification of the Ain⁸. According to these writers, the Nepalese penal code had been greatly reformed, differing from the earlier severe and barbarous criminal punishments. Other writers feel that the Ain merely represents a collection of earlier judicial orders dating from the time of Prithwi Narayan Shah. In other words, according to these writers, the Ain was nothing more than the codification of tradition or continued practice⁹. So far as the first point is concerned, British law had no impact on the Ain, although certain reforms of social practices and criminal laws are to be found in the Ain. As to the second point, the Ain in some ways is the codification of earlier tradition. It contains certain provisions which had been in force since the time of Jayasthiti Malla, but there are many novel provisions as well. If one makes a careful and dispassionate study in light of available earlier records, the conclusion must be that the Ain as a whole was partially customary, yet partially written in accordance with the times when it was laid out.

This brief study is not intended to give a detailed comparative account of the Ain with earlier criminal laws. By confining myself to a few available official orders issued before 1846, as well as the published and unpublished papers of B.H. Hodgson, I will try to discuss some of the more important elements of the criminal code belonging to the period preceding Jang Bahadur with the Ain of Jang Bahadur itself. I wish to point out the differences relating to each case in which the reader should note the reforms brought about on the Nepalese legal code prior to 1854 by Jang Bahadur.

I. Murder.

Similarities: The murder of human beings and the killing of cows was punishable by death both before and during Jang Bahadur's time.

Exception: Brahmans and women escaped the death penalty before and after the codification of the Ain.

II. Accidental Murder of a Human Being

Involuntary manslaughter was an offense punishable by death and the confiscation of property before the codification of the Ain¹⁰.

Point of difference: The Ain demanded only that the criminal's share of property be confiscated if he was over twelve years of age¹¹.

III. Incest (Madnatama Karani)

i. Incest committed with a sister or a daughter was punishable by death before the codification of the Ain¹².

Point of difference: The Ain prescribed that one committing incest with his sister or daughter be branded (damal) and that his property be confiscated¹³.

ii. Incest with one's mother-in-law or step-mother was punished by death before the codification of the Ain¹⁴.

Points of difference: In the Ain, this form of incest was punished by the confiscation of property as well as degradation of caste status for all thread-wearing or twice-born castes (tagadhari jat) and liquor consuming castes (matwali jat), those castes not subject to slavery (namasinya jat)¹⁵. The liquor consuming castes subject to slavery (masinya jat) were enslaved as a result of their crime¹⁶. The same punishment (slavery) was prescribed for other lower castes (chhilo halnu naparne jat) whose contamination did not defile the higher castes¹⁷.

iii. Incest with the wife of an elder brother was punished in the following ways both before and after the codification the Ain:

Before the codification of the Ain¹⁸:

1. Brahmans were degraded from their caste standing and were expelled from the country.
2. In the case of Rajputs, Chhetris, Khas, Magars and Gurungs, their genitals (linga) would be cut off.
3. Untouchables like Damai, Kami, Sarki, Sunwars etc. were reduced to slavery.
4. Castes like Balami, Majhi, Danuwar, Murmi, Bhote and Chepang were punished with death.

Points of difference:

1. Under the Ain, Brahmans were degraded from their caste standing and their property was confiscated. They were also expelled from their villages, but not from the country¹⁹.

2. In the case of Rajputs, the amended provision of the Ain (1919 V.S.) provided that adultery with an elder brother's wife was to be punished by degradation from caste and confiscation of property. The elder brother then had the right to kill the adulterer. Before the amendment of this provision, a male of this caste (Rajput) could marry the widow of his elder brother. The Ain abolished this practice. The offender (marrying his elder brother's wife, probably a widow, because the Ain simply mentions bhauju) was imprisoned for one year and was not allowed to serve food to members of his caste²⁰. Chhetris, Magars and Gurungs were punished by branding them and confiscating their property, but they no longer lost their genitals²¹.

3. The same punishments were handed out to the untouchable groups, but the genitals were no longer cut off.

4. The Bhotas, Chepangs, Majhis, Kumals etc. were punished in the same way prescribed for the castes above²². They were no longer subject to capital punishment for this offense.

IV. Adultery (Jare)

The punishment for adultery was the same both before and after Jang Bahadur's time. The aggrieved husband was allowed to cut-down the adulterer. It must be noted that the Ain gave alternatives to the aggrieved husband in many cases, allowing him several ways of punishing the offender. Such detailed provisions (see Ain pp. 602-637) were not available in the earlier codes. It is surprising that under the earlier code relating to adultery, if the aggrieved husband was unable to kill the interloper, and he did not cut-off the nose of his unfaithful wife, the poor husband was not entitled to government service throughout the rest of his life²³. For such a person to expose his cowardliness by not killing the adulterer, caused him to be looked down upon by society and labelled him as napurnsak or lachhe (cowardly or devoid of manly qualities).

V. Intercaste Sexual Offenses

i. Sexual intercourse with a Brahman woman by a lower caste male was punishable by death and maiming before the enactment of the Ain²⁴.

Points of difference: The maximum punishment for the same offense under the Ain was from two to six years in prison for all castes from Rajput to Matwali, not subject to slavery²⁵. Castes subject

to slavery were enslaved after first having served from one and a half to four years in prison²⁶. Untouchables were branded and their property was confiscated²⁷.

ii. A soldier (soldiers were admitted into the army usually from the touchable castes) before the time of Jang Bahadur, was subject to a death sentence for having intercourse with a Chamarni (a woman of the cobbler caste, an untouchable) against her will²⁸.

Point of difference: For such offenses, the Ain prescribed the confiscation of property and one and a half years in prison, along with scratching the offender's caste on his left cheek²⁹.

iii. Before Jang Bahadur's time, a Magar was deprived of his penis for sexual intercourse with a Sarki woman (untouchable)³⁰. A man of the Bhote caste suffered the same fate for sexual intercourse with a Damai (also untouchable)³¹.

Points of difference: i. For the first kind of sexual offense, the Ain prescribed confiscation of property and imprisonment for a year and a half, along with scratching the offender's caste on his left cheek³². ii. In the case of castes like Bhotes, if the husband of the seduced woman was alive, the aggrieved husband had the option of killing the offender. If the woman was a widow, the offender was degraded from his caste and his property was confiscated, but he was not imprisoned. The rest of the punishments were similar to that meted out to the Magar male above³³.

Comment: In many cases of intercaste sexual offenses, the earlier codes (i.e. pre-Jang Bahadur) did not even spare a dead person from punishment, if he was of low caste and if he had committed unlawful sexual intercourse with a Brahman woman before his death. According to one source, the offender's share of property was taken away by the government after setting aside the shares of his rightful heirs³⁴. Such provisions are not to be found in the Ain. Next, it was common practice in the earlier reigns to cut-off the nose of the unfaithful wife. Not only this, but concealment of illicit sexual intercourse was a crime as well and punished by cutting-off the nose of the one who knowingly concealed the information³⁵. Under the Ain, women (having husbands) belonging to castes from Brahman to Matwalis, not subject to slavery were not deprived of their noses³⁶. This provision suggests that the Ain allowed the practice of cutting-off noses of those women subject to slavery. This is a serious defect in the Ain.

VI. Child Destruction and Abortion

i. Before the codification of the Ain, a woman usually lost her nose for killing a new-born baby. She was also subject to caste degradation³⁷.

ii. The punishment for women of high caste for procuring abortion was the loss of caste standing. Women of low caste were enslaved for the same offense³⁸.

Points of difference: i. The Ain prescribed branding for killing a new-born baby, a woman did not suffer degradation from her caste for committing this offense³⁹. ii. The Ain provided that women belonging to the Tagadhari and Matwali castes were to be imprisoned for one year for procuring abortions by any means. The Ain does not mention the loss of caste in such cases⁴⁰.

VII. Counterfeiting of Coins

Before Jang Bahadur, counterfeiting coins was punished by mutilation, that is the hand of the counterfeiter was cut-off⁴¹.

Point of difference: The Ain provided for the confiscation of the offender's share of property. He was also imprisoned for six years. He could be released before that only if he paid double the amount counterfeited in cash at the rate of Rs. 10 per month⁴². This was the maximum punishment meted out for counterfeiting coins.

VIII. Theft and Burglary

The punishment for stealing the gold turban chain of a chief (bharadar) was death before Jang Bahadur⁴³.

Point of difference: The Ain demanded a maximum punishment of eight years imprisonment for the same offense⁴⁴.

According to Hodgson, for the first offense, theft was punished by cutting-off one hand. For the second offense (including petty burglary), the other hand was cut-off. For the third offense, the thief was put to death. For petty thefts, whipping, fines and simple imprisonment were prescribed. For serious thefts, the hands and nose of the offender were cut-off⁴⁵.

Points of difference: The Ain prescribed that a thief above the age of sixteen, if found stealing goods by breaking doors, walls, locks etc. was to be punished for the first time by restitution of the stolen goods and a fine equal to the amount of goods stolen. In addition, for the second offence, he was to be fined double the amount of goods stolen, along with the restitution of the goods. The third offense led to a six year prison term. In this way if he committed thefts for a fourth, fifth and sixth time, he would be branded and his property confiscated⁴⁶.

Comment: In all kinds of thefts and burglaries, the Ain gave details regarding the circumstances of the thefts committed along with a age of the person or persons committing the burglaries or thefts. A thief below the age of twelve was never fined. A thief between the ages of twelve and sixteen was branded and his property confiscated, if he has committed thefts or burglaries repeatedly for seven times or more⁴⁷. As far as the period preceeding Jang

Bahadur was concerned, these particulars were not specified. The death penalty was demanded only when goods belonging to the government were stolen by government officials, if the officials were of the castes punishable by death, otherwise branding and confiscation of property were prescribed⁴⁸. More or less the same punishment was meted out to those offenders who engaged in stealing or mutilating images of gods and goddesses and the statues of private individuals kept in temples or in other philanthropic institutions⁴⁹.

From the study of the above mentioned principle cases, it is clear that in the matter of punishment relating to certain grave offenses, the Ain departed from the earlier administration of severe punishments in criminal cases. The Ain was flexible enough to provide for alternative punishments in many cases which were absent before its enactment. In some cases, the Ain introduced more lenient punishments not found in earlier regimes. The practice of punishing through exile from the country was abolished by the Ain. In the period preceding Jang Bahadur's rule, women and men could be expelled from the country for even offenses like illicit sexual intercourse⁵⁰. Trial by ordeal, which was practiced prior to the time of Jang Bahadur, was abolished by the Ain⁵¹. The Ain partially departed from the practice of punishing women (having husbands) for adultery by cutting-off their noses. Further, the practice of cutting-off the genitals of males for certain kinds of offenses was done away with by the Ain.

FOOTNOTES

1/ For the judicial system of the ancient period, see
i. Dhanabajra Vajracharya, "Lichchhavi Kal Ko Naya Vyavastha Ko Ek Jhalak" in Purnima, year 4, No. 4. Kathmandu: Samshodhan Mandal, Vikram Sambat (V.S.) 2024, pp- 345-55 ii. D.R. Regmi, Ancient Nepal, Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969 (3rd edition), pp. 250-260.

2/ Daniel Wright (e.d)., History of Nepal. Calcutta: Ranjan Gupta, 1966, p. 123.

3/ Ibid., p. 124

4/ Ibid., p. 123

5/ Itihas Prakash (ed. Yogi Narahari Nath), Kathmandu: Itihas Prakash Sangh, V.S. 2013, No. 2, Vol. 3, pp. 419-25.

6/ B.H. Hodgson; Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects. London: Trubner and Co., 1880, Vol. II Section. XII "Some Account of the system of Law and Police as recognised in the State of Nepal", Answer to question No. XXVII, p. 231.

7/ For a few similar points borrowed by the present Muluki Ain from the Ain of 1854, see Muluki Ain (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, V.S. 2029, 4th edition, sections (secs.) 24-25, p. 186, sec., 30, p. 16; sec., 5, p. 4; Sec., 11, P. 7 and sec., 4. P. 4.

8/ i. Satiskumar., Rana Polity in Nepal, 1846-1901, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967, p. 114.

ii. Ramakant., Indo-Nepalese Relations, 1817-77, Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1968, p. 253 and p. 263.

iii. Asad Husain., British India's Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal, 1857-1947. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970, p. 53.

9/ i. Rewatiraman Khanal., "Nepal Ko Nyaya Prashasan Ek Sinha valokan" in Nepal Kanun Patrika, Vol. 10, No.11, V.S. 2025, pp. 1-2.

ii. M.S. Jain., The Emergence of a New Aristocracy in Nepal; Agra: Shri Ram Mehra and Co., 1972, pp- 161-184.

10/ B.H. Hodgson., "Judicial System and Police in Nepal". Foreign Political Consultation (P.C.), 4 November, 1831, No. 22, National Archives of India (N.A.I.), New Delhi Punishment for various Crimes", pp. 26-27.

11/ Shri 5 Surendra Vikram Shah Dev Ko Shasan Kalma Bane Ko Muluki Ain., H.M.G. Ministry of Law and Justice, V.S. 2022, sec., 2, p.292. hereafter quoted as Ain.

12/ i. Leonhard Adam., "Criminal Law and Procedure in Nepal A Century Ago: Notes Left by Brian H. Hodgson" in The Far Eastern Quarterly, Vol. I, No. 2, February, 1950, p. 164.

ii. Shamsheer Bahadur Thapa., Ranabir Singh Thapa, Kathmandu: Jagadamba Prakashan, V.S. 2023, p. 132.

13/ Ain., op. cit., pp. 527-554.

Punishment by branding means, according to the Ain (Sec., 2, p. 212), to Scratch the 18th consonant of the Devnagari alphabet (Da) on the left cheek of the criminal.

14/ Adam Leonhard., op. cit., pp. 165-66.

15/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 2, p. 527, Sec., 10 p. 529; Sec., 3, P. 532; Sec., 12, p. 534, Sec., 14, p. 541., Sec., 3, p. 543 and Sec., 13, pp. 545-46.

16/ Ibid., Sec., 12, p. 550.

17/ Ibid., Sec., 3, P. 551., Sec., 8-9, p. 552., See Sections 3 and 9 pp. 553-54 prescribed for the untouchables.

18/ Chittaranjan Nepali., Bhim Sen Thapa Ra Tatkalin Nepal, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, V.S. 2022, pp. 203-204.

19/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 2, p. 527.

20/ Ibid., Secs., 19-20, p. 536.

21/ Ibid., Secs., 2-3 and 7, pp. 538-39., Secs., 2-3 p. 543, and Sec., 7, p. 544.

22/ Ibid., Secs., 2-3 and 6, pp. 553-54.

23/ Chittaranjan Nepali., Shri 5 Rana Bahadur Shah. Kathmandu: Mery Rajbhandari, V.S. 2020, pp. 167-68.

24/ Leonhard Adam., op. cit., pp. 164-65 and pp. 167-68.

25/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 1. p. 655., Sec., 1. p. 657., Sec., 1, p. 659., Sec., 1, p. 663 and Sec., 1, p. 665.

26/ Ibid., Sec., 1, pp. 667-68.

27/ Ibid., Sec., 1, p. 669.

28/ Leonhard Adam., op. cit., p. 165.

29/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 11, p. 598 and Sec., 2-3, pp. 670-71.

30/ Leonhard Adam., op. cit., p. 166.

31/ Ibid.

32/ Ain., op. cit., Secs, 2-3 pp. 670-71.

33/ Ibid.

34/ S.B. Thapa., op. cit., pp. 128-132.

35/ Leonhard Adam., op.cit., pp. 165-67.

36/ Ain ., op. cit., Sec., 8, p. 134.

37/ i. P.C. 4 November, 1831, No. 22 (N.A.I.) "Punishment for various crimes", pp. 26-27.

ii. S.B. Thapa., op. cit., p. 121 and p. 128.

38/ P.C. 4 November, 1831, No. 22 (N.A.I) "Punishment for various crimes," pp. 26-26.

39/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., I, p. 640.

40/ Ibid., Secs., 2-3 (p. 640).

41/ Leonhard Adam., op.cit., p. 167.

42/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 15, p. 152.

43/ Leonhard Adam., op. cit., p. 164.

44/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 27, p. 308.

45/ B.H. Hodgson., Miscellaneous Essays., op. cit., Answer to Question No. XCV., p. 235.

46/ Ain., op. cit., Sec., 14, p. 305.

47/ Ibid., Sec., 8. p. 303.

48/ Ibid., Sec., 25, p. 308.

49/ Ibid., Sec., 53, p. 314. Dacoity committed by more than five persons by breaking into a house coupled with rape was also punished by death. (Ibid., Sec., 20, p. 306).

50/ i. Leonhard Adam., op. cit., p. 168.

ii. S.B. Thapa., op. cit., p. 128.

51/ Ain., op. cit., Secs., 1-2, p. 234 Trial by ordeal which was practiced before Jang Bahadur especially in civil matters was called Niya or Nyaya in Nepali. For instance, if a person went to the court of law and complained that another person owed him a certain amount of money to which payment had been refused knowing the fact that the person or persons to bear witness had died, the Ditha or the Bichari (judge and his assistant) would urge both the plaintiff and the defendant to reach an agreement. If they failed to reach an agreement, the case would be decided by ordeal which is best explained by B.H. Hodgson in the following:

"The ordeal is called nyaya, and the form of it is as follows: The names of the respective parties are inscribed on two pieces of paper, which are rolled up into balls, and then have puja offered them. From each party a fine or fee of one rupee is taken. The balls are then affixed to staffs of reed, and two more are taken from each party. The reeds are then entrusted to two of the havildars (beadles) of the court to have to the Queen's Tank; and with the havildars, an examining officer of the court, a Brahman, and the parties proceed thither, as also two men of the Chamakhalak (chamar) Caste.

"On arriving at the Tank the examining officer again exhorts the parties to avoid the ordeal by adopting some other mode of settling the business, the merits of which are only known to themselves. If they continue to insist on the ordeal, the two havildars, each holding one of the reeds, go, one to the east and the other to the west side of the tank, entering the water about kneedeep. The Brahman, the parties, and the Chamakhalaks, all at this moment enter the water a little away; and the Brahman performs worship to Varun in the name of the parties, and repeats a secret text, the meaning of which is that mankind knows not what possess in the minds of each other, but that all inward thoughts and past acts are known to the gods Surya, Chandra, Varuna and Yama and that they will do justice between the parties in this cause.

"When the puja is over, the Brahman gives the Tilak to the two Chamakhalaks, and says to them, "Let the champion of truth win, and let the false one's champion lose!" this being said, the Brahman of the parties come out of the water and the Chamakhalaks separate, one going to each place where the reed is erected. They then enter the deep water, and at a signal given, both emerge themselves in the water at the same instant. Whichever of them first rises from the water, the reed nearest to him is instantly destroyed, together with the scroll attached to it. The other reed is carried to the court, where the ball of paper is opened, and the name read. If the scroll bears the plaintiff's name, he wins the cause; if it be that of the defendant, the later is victorious".

(See Miscellaneous Essays., op. cit., pp. 220-21.



some types of reduplication in the newari verb phrase

Iswaranand Sresthacharya

Reduplication is a syntactic process which is quite common in both spoken and written Newari¹. There is no single meaning that all instances of reduplication hold in common, rather, the semantic force of the reduplication can be determined only in relation to the specific construction involved. There are a number of positions in which reduplication occurs. This paper does not attempt to exhaust the senses or uses of the various types of reduplication, but aims rather to provide a brief survey of the uses of reduplication in certain constructions closely associated with the Newari verb. No attempt has been made to give an account of reduplication in the noun-centered constructions of Newari. Such a study would have to account for a wide range of reduplicative types not touched upon here.

For the purposes of this paper, the following varieties of reduplication are distinguished: 1. Reduplication of the finite forms of the verb, 2. Reduplication of non-finite form of the verb, and 3. Reduplication of preverbal elements.

1. Reduplication of the finite forms of the verb.

1.1. Morphology of the forms.

There are four forms which will be referred to as 'finite' in this presentation: the past disjunct, the past conjunct, the non-past disjunct, and the non-past conjunct². These four forms are illustrated for Class I verbs (verbs with stem-final n) in Figure 1.

	Past	Non-Past
Disjunct	wa wana He went	wa wani He will go
Conjunct	ji wanā I went	ji wane I shall go

Figure 1. Finite forms of the Class I verb, wan-e, 'to go'.

The finite forms of verbs in Class II differ from those in Class I as illustrated in Figure 2.

	Past	Non-Past
Disjunct	wa sita He died	wa sii He will die
Conjunct	ji sinā I died	ji sii I shall die

Figure 2. Finite forms of the Class II verb. si-ve. 'to die'.

Class III verbs, like Class II verbs have stems which end in vowels. Class III verbs, however, differ in their finite forms, as can be seen from Figure 3.

	Past	Non-past
Disjunct	wa wala He came	wa wai He will come
Conjunct	ji wayā I came	ji wae I shall come

Figure 3. Finite forms of the Class III verb, wa-ye 'to come'.

Class IV verbs have stems ending in l but otherwise verbs in Class IV form their finite forms in much the same way as do Class I verbs.

	Past	Non-Past
Disjunct	wa cila He moved aside	wa cili He will move aside
Conjunct	ji cilā I moved aside	ji cile I shall move aside

Figure 4. Finite forms of the Class IV verb, cil-e, 'to move aside'

Class V verbs have stems which end in stops. These verbs have a past disjunct form which is quite distinct from those of the other verb classes as may be seen from Figure 5.

	Past	Non-Past
Disjunct	waṣ chanta saatala He called you	waa chanta saati He will call you
Conjunct	jii chanta saatā I called you	jii chanta saate I shall call you

Figure 5. Finite forms of the Class V verb, saat-e, 'to call'.

The regular finite forms for verbs of classes II and III can be predicted if the final vowel of the verb stem is known. The finite forms of the remaining classes can be predicted in terms of the final consonants. The part of the stem which must be known to predict the finite forms of the verb will be referred to as the 'stem final'. These finite forms are summarized in Figure 6.

	Stem	Citation	Past	Past	Non-Past	Non-Past
	Final	Infinitive	Disjunct	Conjunct	Disjunct	Conjunct
Class I	n	n-e	na	nā	ni	ne
Class II	i	i-ye	ita	inā	ii	ii
	ā	ā-ye	āta	ānā	āi	āe
	a	a-ye	ata	ayā	ai	ae
	wa	wa-ye	wata	wayā	wai	wae
	u	u-ye	uta	unā	wi	wi
Class III	i	i-ye	ila	iyā	ii	ii
	e	e-ye	ela	eyā	ei	ee
	ā	ā-ye	ālā	āyā	āi	āe
	a	a-ye	ala	ayā	ai	ae
	wa	wa-ye	wala	wayā	wai	wae
	u	u-ye	ula	uyā	wi	wi

	Stem	Citation	Past	Past	Non-Past	Non-Past
	Final	Infinitive	Disjunct	Conjunct	Disjunct	Conjunct
Class IV						
	l	l-e	la	lā	li	le
Class V						
	p	p-e	pala	pā	pi	pe
	t	t-e	tala	tā	ti	te
	k	k-e	kala	kā	ki	ke

Figure 6. Summary of finite inflections for regular verbs.

In addition to the regular finite forms there is one non-finite form that is involved in the reduplication of the finite forms. This form will be referred to as the short stem of the verb. In Class I, the short stem is obtained by nasalizing the stem vowel and deleting the stem-final *n* (without lengthening the stem vowel). Thus the verb wān-e 'to go' has the short stem wā. In Classes II and III, the short stem is found simply by deleting the -ye of the citation infinitive. Thus the Class II verb, yā-ye 'to do', has the short, yā, and the Class III verb, bi-ye 'to give', has the short stem, bi. In Class IV the short stem is obtained by deleting the stem-final l. Thus sil-e, 'to rinse', has the short stem, si. In Class V the short stem is obtained by suffixing u to the stem. Thus the verb, saat-e 'to call', has the short stem, saatu.

1.2. Reduplicative Constructions.

There are several ways in which a finite verb may be reduplicated. It is possible to reduplicate simply by repeating the finite form of the main verb. The element of meaning carried by this kind of reduplication is that of repeated action performed with intensity.

1. wāḡ jītaa thwāta He kicked me.
2. wāḡ jītaa thwāta thwāta He kicked me hard, again and again.

Any finite form of the verb can be reduplicated in this way.

3. waita thwānā thwānā I kicked him hard again and again.
4. jītaa thwāi thwāi He will kick me hard again and again.
5. waita thwāe thwāe I will kick him hard again and again.

This type of reduplication is possible with a wide range of action verbs and is limited to the finite forms of these verbs³.

Another important type of reduplication involves various kinds of emphatic elements which are inserted between the members of the reduplicated verb. The first member of such a reduplication consists of the short stem of the verb. The second member is the inflected form of the verb. There are several different emphatic elements which occur in this type of reduplication. One such element is the emphatic, -ttu, which indicates continuous or repeated action.

6. wəṭṭ chanta thwā-ttu thwāta. He kicked you again and again.
 7. wəṭṭ jitaā sā-ttu sāla. He pulled me again and again.

An expansion of this element, -ttu matu, is used to indicate repeated action which is particularly intensive and frequent.

8. wa huulae kā-ttu matu kāta. He was pressed hard again and again in the crowd.

In the same position jaka occurs in the sense of 'only'.

9. wəṭṭ na jaka nala, jyā ma-yāā. He only ate. He did not work.
Jaka also occurs in the temporal sense, 'just as'.

10. wəṭṭ kā jaka, kalam sena. Just as he took the pen it was ruined.

Another finite set of reduplications occurs with the particle, niṭi 'first'.

28. na niṭi nae ale jyā yāe. First I will eat, then I will work.
 29. kā niṭi kāla ale wana. First he took, then he went.

2. Reduplication of non-finite forms of the verb.

2.1 Morphology of the forms.

There are three forms to which we shall refer as non-finite in this presentation, the Stative (or Long) form, the Gerundive (or Absolutive, or $\bar{A}$) form and the Infinitival form. In some dialects the Gerundive is phonologically equivalent to the Past Conjunct finite form, while in other dialects the Gerundive is distinguished by a lengthening of the final vowel. The infinitive is in general phonologically equivalent to the Non-Past Conjunct form as shown in Figure 6.

The Stative (or Long) form is constructed in one of two ways depending upon the final vowel of the verb stem. Where this vowel is i, the stative form will end with -yuu, as may be seen from the examples in Figure 7.

	Citation Infinitive	Stative
Class I		
to tie	cin-e	cyuu
to go	wan-e	waa
Class II		
to pursue	li-ye	lyuu
to do	yā-ye	yāā

Figure 7. Two patterns of Stative formation for verbs of Class I and II.

	Citation Infinitive	Stative
Class III		
to give	bi-ye	byuu
to take	kā-ye	kāā
Class IV		
to exchange	hil-e	hyuu
to pull	sāl-e	sāā

Figure 8. Two patterns of Stative formation for verbs of Class III and IV.

The Stative formation with verbs of Class V (stop-final stems) depends upon the final consonant rather than upon the stem-final vowel.

	Citation Infinitive	Stative
Class V		
to help	twap-e	twapyuu
to call	saat-e	saatuu
to snatch	lāk-e	kākuu

Figure 9. Two patterns of Stative formation for verbs of Class V.

2.2 Reduplicative Constructions.

There are several ways in which a non-finite form may be reduplicated. One important kind of reduplication consists of the short stem of the verb followed by the stative form of the verb in which the final vowel has been nasalized. This form of reduplication carries with it the sense of continuing activity, often as part of the background or cohesive linkage of a narrative discourse. These forms often provide a kind of linkage between paragraphs, with the reduplicated form being used to open a new paragraph by referring to action which was in progress at the close of the preceding paragraph. The following sentence, for example, occurs at the point in a story just after a jackal had completed his escape from the body of a dead elephant.

11. dhwa-cā wā wā wā wā chaguu gwī lāta

As the jackal was going along, he found himself in a forest.

The reference contained in the reduplicated pairs, wā wā wā wā 'going along going along' is to action that was initiated at the end of the preceding paragraph. The reduplicated form thus provides continuity with the preceding paragraph, while a transition is made to a new setting. Strings of reduplicated pairs of this kind are at least as common as single reduplicated pairs.

12. nimhaesiyā bice the jyaaagu kisimā ju jū jū jū...

The two of them, continuing to be in the middle in that way...

Certain non-finite forms may be reduplicated when they occur as the complements of certain verbs. One variety of reduplication in this position involves a replacement of the stem vowel in the second member of the reduplicative pair. Gerundive forms which occur as complements of the verbs, wa-ye 'to come', and wan-e 'to go', undergo such reduplication.

13. wa thwānā thinā wana. He went kicking and doing other such things.

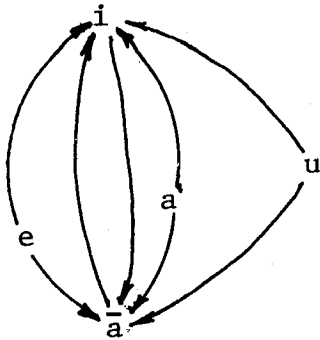
14. wa ana bākhaa kanā kinā wana. He was there telling stories and the like.

This kind of reduplication has an interesting element of meaning. It indicates that the action of the complement verb is accompanied by other similar or similarly appropriate actions. This kind of reduplication also occurs in the infinitival forms which complement the verb, yā-ye 'to do'.

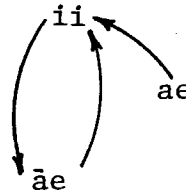
15. nyāe nii yāta He used to do the buying and other similar tasks.

16. wā thwāe thii yāta. He used to kick and do other such things.

The patterns of vowel replacement which characterize the second member of this kind of reduplicative pair is summarized in Figure 10.



short vowels and
long vowels other than ii,
ae and āe.



long vowels ii, ae and āe

Figure 10. Patterns of vowel replacement in associated action complement reduplication.

Prevocalic glides are deleted before shifted vowels in the second member of such reduplicative pairs, as may be seen from the following examples.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 17. bwayā biyā | exhibiting and other like activities. |
| 18. swānā sinā | joining and the like. |

As was true in the case of finite reduplication, various kinds of emphatic and subordinating particles play an important role in the reduplication of non-finite forms. Jaka and hee, for example, occur in both kinds of reduplication.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 19. ji gwārā jaka tulā,
nhyaa wala. | Just as I lay down I went to sleep. |
| 20. wāq si hee syuu. | He certainly knows. |
| 21. kha hee khaa lā? | Is it certain? |

There is another set of reduplicative constructions with the particle, the 'like, as if' which occur with the complements of three verbs, ju-ye 'to become', cwan-e 'to seem', and yā-ye 'to do'. The data are not altogether clear at this point, but it would appear that the verb forms with cwan-e are finite and that the verb forms with the other two verbs are non-finite.

22. dyaa lwi the lwi the
jula. The sun is about to rise.
23. jyā sṣ sṣ wa sii the
sii the jula Working and working, he was about
to die.
24. wṣṣ nhyaa waekii the
waekii the cwana. He was about to go to sleep.
25. wa nhilii the nhilii
the cwana. He was about to smile.
26. wṣṣ jitaā dāe the dāe
the yāta. He was about to hit me
(or, He pretended to beat me).
27. nyāā lā kucā nune the
nune the yāta. The fish was about to swallow a
piece of meat.

Another non-finite reduplicative construction makes use of the short form of the verb, the particle kiki, the infinitival form of the verb followed by the verb ma-gāā 'not enough'. The whole construction carries something of a concessive force: 'Though he X-ed more and more, it was not enough'.

28. guli jaka bāālaāgu What a beautiful face! Though he
khwāā! wa looks at it more and more it
swa swa kiki swae is not enough.
ma-gāā.

Non-finite reduplication occurs also in the nominalization of verbs. Reduplication is a normal feature of plural nominals constructed from the stative form of the verb.

29. māā māā pṣṣ those in need
30. syuu syuu pṣṣ those who know

3. Reduplication of preverbal elements.

Reduplication occurs with elements other than verbal stems. There are preverbal elements which are closely associated with verbal stems which also undergo reduplication. It will not be possible to exhaust the variety of reduplication in this position within this paper. For the purposes of this paper it will be sufficient to point out that in this position also, various kinds of reduplication can be distinguished on the basis of the element of meaning carried by the reduplication.

There is a certain set of preverbal elements derived from adjectivals for which reduplication carries the sense of a reduc-

tion of intensity and for which an additional negative reduplication signifies an even further softening of intensity.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 31. p̄aṽla | It became sour. |
| 32. p̄aṽ p̄aṽ dhāla (or
p̄a p̄a dhāla) | It became somewhat sour. |
| 33. p̄a p̄a ma-p̄a dhāla | It became slightly sour. |
| 34. cikula | It became cold. |
| 35. ciku ciku dhāla (or
ci ci dhāla) | It became somewhat cold. |
| 36. ci ci ma-ci dhāla | It became slightly cool. |

A second kind of meaning associated with the reduplication of preverbal elements is illustrated by a certain set of preverbals derived from the quantifier system. The meaning of reduplication in this instance is that of a progressive augmentation of degree.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 37. ta jāla | It became taller. |
| 38. ta ta jāla | It became taller and taller |
| 39. ci hāla | It became shorter |
| 40. ci ci hāla | It became shorter and shorter. |

A third kind of meaning associated with the reduplication of preverbal elements is a distributive meaning. This kind of semantic element is found in reduplicated quantifier phrases in preverbal position.

41. the-pāe tha-pāe jāla Each became this high.

The same meaning is conveyed by various reductions and variations of this reduplicated structure.

42. tha tha-pāe jāla
 tha-pāe pāe jāla
 tha-pāe tha-pāe jāā jula
 tha-pāe jāā jāā jula

A fourth kind of meaning associated with the reduplication of verbal prefixes is that of augmentation or intensification.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 43. pasalyāā jītaa la
thyāta | The shopkeeper cheated me. |
| 44. pasalyāā jītaa la la
thyāta | The shopkeeper cheated me badly. |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 45. pasalyāā jītaa la la
ma-la thyāta | The shopkeeper cheated
me very badly. |
| 46. wa dhe cula | He staggered. |
| 47. wa dhe dhe cula | He staggered a great deal. |
| 48. wa dhe dhe ma-dhe
cula | He staggered a very great deal. |

FOOTNOTES

1/ The author wishes to express appreciation to Mrs. L.K. Friedman for helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper and to Dr. A. Hale for composing the final draft.

2/ The analysis of the verb presented here is not original with this paper. For a fuller discussion of the forms and their meanings see Hale 1971a, 1971b, 1973, and Sresthacharya, Maskey, and Hale, 1971, pp. 79, ff.

3/ It appears that certain stative verbs fail to appear with this form of reduplication.

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book department

Short Reviews

Mechi dekhi Mahakali, I-IV volumes, Published by the Department of Information, Ministry of Communications, H.M.G; pp. 4380, 4 maps, price, Rs. 400/-

The publication of four volumes of this book marks the biggest triumph yet for publishing in Nepal. The design of a single book, in four volumes with a total of 4380 pages setting-out to describe the entire country, is quite unprecedented. The book is mainly a description of the most basic and primary data on Nepal as well as a listing of current developmental activities going on in its seventy-five districts. The gist of the book has been remarkably captured in its most attractively coined title. The origin of the idea for writing this book has been explained clearly in an introduction prefixed to all four volumes. It says: "The scarcity of information on the districts was felt as early as V.S. 2027 (1970 A.D.) when His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, who was then Crown Prince, undertook informal visits to the different parts of the kingdom. In response to this situation, therefore, the Janch Boojh Kendra started gathering information which would be useful mainly at the time of such visits by the Crown Prince. Thus reports (of information) began gradually accumulating on each district, which seemed later to be of value. Following the pious wish of His Majesty the King that many people would benefit from knowing these facts, if they should be made public in an easily accessible form for everyone alike, a project was launched under the auspices of the Janch Boojh Kendra for standardizing these reports and for preparing them for publication. The book acquired its present shape in approximately one and a half years time, with the hard work of many special officers. It is a privilege for the Kendra to be able to publish the four volumes of Mechi dekhi Mahakali in the historic year of the celebration of the auspicious coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev as a token of his empathy for the sorrow and happiness of each and every Nepali living in the remote corners of the country" (all translations from the reviewed book are the reviewer's). Indeed there could be no other sentiments more worthy of cherishing on the finishing of the project in the auspicious coronation year. As His Majesty has been a committed ruler and has been directly instrumental in unleashing the forces of development in this country, the conception of the book establishes his vision once again. The book is expected to be of great value to Nepal's development administrators by providing them with accurate and up-to-date information on all districts from one source. All those who were actively associated with the project and who developed the idea of this book from the beginning deserve, therefore, our unstinted praise.

It is quite true that accurate information of districts are vital for administrators more than for anybody else. One cannot but recall here the case of British Colonial administrators in India, who in order to surmount numerous difficulties imposed by their ignorance of the terrain, people and culture of an alien country, set out to overcome these difficulties by writing up district gazeteers. They did a remarkable job of mapping out their regions and describing them closely from their own study, research and observations. They were quite meticulous and thorough in their work. Although the old gazeteers are now useless for gaining current information, their value as reference works is still undiminished. The volumes of Mechi dekhi Mahakali are also essentially district manuals, but district administrators themselves have not been involved in their production and hence their accounts do not derive from a long, intimate and first-hand knowledge of districts by their authors. They are, in fact, compiled accounts of information gathered in the various district offices in the course of routine performance of administration by these offices. This in turn had been obtained on request by the authors at the Janch Boojh Kendra. This data alone would have been far too inadequate and insufficient. The ingenuity of the authors lay in expanding, elucidating and supporting this data further from the material which lay scattered in diverse publications such as books, articles, handouts and various ministerial and departmental reports of the government. In its final form the district studies are the sum and substance of these diverse sources digested together in a narrative averaging fifty-two pages for each district. Thus, there is a distinction between these volumes and the Indian gazeteers of the British Indian period. Writing about the objective of producing such a work, the authors say in the introduction: "The objective of compilation of Mechi dekhi Mahakali is narrow in one sense and broad in another. It is narrow because it has attempted only to describe each district separately. It is not a work seeking to describe a unified account of Nepal, because the fullness of Nepal as a country is more than just an aggregate of its seventy-five districts. Further it does not attempt to study a specific social or economic problem in its full detail. As far as possible, it has pointed out such problems wherever they are known to occur. On the other hand, its broad objectives become clear as soon as it is known that it has attempted to provide information on the geographical, historical, social, economic and all other aspects of the district and that these volumes are not written to serve the needs and interests of a particular section of society alone, but are aimed at being useful for researchers, planners, administrators, students, tourists as well as general readers alike". Thus in their broad address, the present manuals do resemble the Indian gazeteers, although the two works vary considerably in the mode of their preparation.

The four volumes are divided according to the four Development regions and from Vol. I to IV the narrative proceeds from east to west as the title makes quite obvious. Each volume first gives a summary of the region studied, followed by a description of individual districts. The material in the regional summary is divided up in much the same way as the descriptions of each district which follow. All districts are analysed under identical subject-headings, namely; (i) introduction, giving mainly the location, origin of the name of district and the principal factors, if any, for which that district is known (ii) physical features and natural resources (iii) historical background (iv) important places in the district (v) population and people's life style (vi) economic conditions (vii) transport and communication (viii) education, health and drinking water (ix) administration and panchayat (x) conclusion, which tries to sum up the development activities or the development potentials of the district in future. It is evident that in the above scheme of things, practically everything about a district can be said. The value of the volumes will, therefore, lie in a comprehensive treatment of districts under such varied topics and in serving them up-ready and bound-all in one place for everybody's benefit. The true worth of the book will only be tested by time. Despite it, its popularity can safely be predicted since it is the first work of its kind produced under the official seal of the Department of Information of the Ministry of Communication of His Majesty's Government. It has been reported that since its entry into the book-market, the book has been very well received, and despite its high price, it has been selling quickly, approaching the proverbial hot cakes. More than anything else, this is the greatest vindication of a book.

Accuracy of facts will not be the sole criterion for evaluating this book. Certain observations, however can be made with a belief that they will be deemed useful at the time of the next edition of the work. The reviewer, for one, would consider this laudable project to be far from finished. We hope that future editions of this book will be brought out by revising and updating them at regularly set time intervals.

It is impossible for any one reviewer to examine the accuracy of all accounts on such widely ranged topics of all seventy-five districts of Nepal. Therefore, it shall be our attempt here to make only a few observations regarding the general approach and presentation style of the work. One broad comment about the book, perhaps, might be the absence of uniformity of the compiled material. Seemingly, all districts are uniformly studied under identical sub-headings. These headings are comprehensive enough for providing a fair summary of the developmental activities of the district. But the presentation of details in the described material tends to vary from one district to another. If accounts in some places are succinctly made and bolstered by figures and tables presenting knowledge derived from the author's own study

and observation; elsewhere such accounts are given merely a facile treatment or even omitted. This impression is given by the fact that the regional summary of Vol. IV presents sixteen tables whereas the same summary in Vol. I gives only ten. In order to maintain a respectable length, narratives at times are tenuously stretched, or generalized, where generalisation holds no great risk of committing errors (physical features). Elsewhere the same account is repeated over and over again in many places (history). I give two examples of a general nature of description. "In its (Manang's) surroundings at higher altitudes when snow starts melting in summer and the grasses blossom forth into flowers of multiple colours, the atmosphere of this place becomes highly pleasant with the shepherd boys and girls moving about freely singing" (Vol. III, p. 120). The other instance is: "The majority of people of this district are Hindus. The followers of Islam are the second largest in number. Thus the people of this district, despite their diverse religious calling, celebrate national festivals like Dasain and Tihar in their own ways and as best as they can afford them". (Vol. II, p. 326). These paragraphs are inserted under subheadings of physical features and population and people's life respectively. Temples and their architecture are described, however generally, in the three towns of the Kathmandu Valley, but are sadly omitted in the far-western development region, which is the other most temple-bearing tract of Nepal. The task of presenting a uniformly consistent account of all districts is no small task. Statistics, facts and figures would be interesting in all cases, but desired statistics may not have even been collected in many districts and if other sources exist, the authors may not have been aware of their presence. There was, after all, so much ground to cover on so many subjects. There was a time limitation, so not all information could have been pursued, but it would have been considered wise not to omit any available information for the sake of uniformity but rather put everything that one had been able to gather on a district into the description. It would be rewarding to develop a detailed framework for future editions of the book within which all information could be better standardized and no significant omission of facts about a district made. This would even permit time to go and make observations and gather statistics where these do not already exist.

Information on population statistics are up to date and extensively given. Next to it, educational, meteorological and land and agricultural accounts are supported by summarising tables for the preceding few years. They all are quite useful for being authoritative references to district data.

The historical summaries have failed to present uniform treatments of the subject. Since many hands were responsible for writing it, there is a lack of relationship and balance between the accounts of various districts. No rule has been followed regarding elaboration or abridgement of historical events described.

History is a sensitive field of study and can be full of dispute and controversies. In many places, unsifted historical accounts making little discrimination between myths, legends and stories have been blended together with history. These accounts may not confound the specialist, but the layman could easily get a distorted and erroneous picture of the subject. References are made to all kinds of history books, both accredited as well as those of dubious value. Incidentally, this portion of the book has the most copious foot-notes. A few words might be said here about the system adopted for foot-noting in general. References are cited in English or Nepali showing no consistency. They are also incompletely cited. Further, where accounts are summarised almost entirely from a particular source, it is quite unnecessary to quote the same source in one page several times (Vol. I, p. 16). It would have been sufficient to mention the source once in the outset saying that the summary is made from it. Next, such well-publicized things as the height of Mt. Everest have been conscientiously foot-noted, but less known but interesting facts have been passed without quoting the source. In one place Kirkpatrick's book has been quoted secondhand from Regmi's book (Vol. I, p. 17), while the authors were quite familiar with this work and have cited it in many places elsewhere in the work. A complete bibliography of the works cited would have been most useful at the end of each volume.

Dates in the book have been given mainly in Vikram Era, but this is not consistently followed everywhere. In several places, use of the Saka, the Vikram and the Christian era is freely interpersed.

Anthropological notes on the various socio-ethnic groups of Nepal have been made in their supposed 'core' regions. It is good to have made and followed a scheme throughout the book consistently. Twenty-four such groups have been studied in the following districts: Limbu in Panchthar, Lepcha in Illam, Rajbansi in Jhapa, Meche in Jhapa, Satar in Jhapa, Dhimal in Morang, Sherpa in Solukhumbu, Rai in Khotang, Thami in Dolakha, Hayu in Ramechhap, Sunuwar in Ramechhap, Danuwar in Sindhuli, Tamang in Kabharepalanchok, Newar in Kathmandu, Chepang in Makwanpur, Majhi in Chitawan, Gurung in Lamjung, Thakali in Mustang, Chhantel in Myagdi, Magar in Palpa, Raute in Salyan, Raji in Dang, Tharu in Kailali and Byansi in Darchula. Thus the anthropology of Nepal is better organized in the book. Refreshing accounts of many of the lesser-known social groups of Nepal have been compiled in this book for Nepali readers, which is commendable. In writing these accounts, because of diverse hands having written them, there is also a great deal of variation in the selection, emphasis and elaboration of the material. Their success lies in avoiding the placement of any undue stress on the differences in ethnicity of the various social groups which is commonly seen in the writings of foreign scholars. It is sad however that accounts of the Pahadi caste-

groups, especially the Chhetri-Bahunns are missing from a concentrated study in one place. These are among the most active and leading social groups of Nepal having played a crucial role in Nepal's birth as a nation and are also one of the ubiquitous groups settled everywhere from east to west. They have their own social organization, family-structure, rites, rituals, superstitions, economic preferences and to this extent they vary not only with other social groups within Nepal, but also vary with their high-caste counterparts in the plains. To ignore them because of a belief that they are only a part of India's Aryan cultural group is to miss many finer points of change that have resulted from having to adapt into a new environment.

It is not unnatural to have printing errors in a book of this size, whatever precautions may have been taken to avoid it. There is a list of errata at the end of each volume. Despite this, one fact still makes one uneasy, that is that a large share of these errors are in the numerical data. For example, the errata list in Vol. II runs to 487 entries, out of which as many as 316 are numerical errors. In Vol. II this number is 272 against a total of 453 errors. This has rendered almost all figures in the text unsafe for use without having checked them once in the errata. Some mistakes have escaped detection, although they are few. One such uncorrected mistake appears in page 310 of Vol. IV which has been printed as 210.

The book will be difficult for constant reference without an exhaustive index. Because, by its very nature and scope, it is not meant to be finished in one reading and thus forgotten. It is still possible to add an index in a separate volume as a compendium. A separate map for each volume will enable to locate all the names mentioned in the book. The volumes are wrapped in glossy jackets each with an illustration (three colours and one half-tone) of four major landmarks of this country, each located in the four development regions, namely Mount Sagarmatha (Everest), Pashupatinath temple, Lumbini and Lake Rara. Since they are symbolic of Nepal in many sense and have been foremost in introducing Nepal to the outside world, there selection is most apt.

The above appraisal of the book cannot diminish its value to a wide range of its readers. This constitutes the first complete work about all the districts of Nepal. A most useful and necessary first step has been made in these volumes towards systematizing our knowledge of the entire country. It was planned with a rare foresight and virorously pursued by all concerned with this project which has done a great service to the country.

P.R.S.

Bibliography of Nepal, Kathmandu, The Royal Nepal Academy, 1975, pp. 525, Price Rs. 74/-

The Royal Nepal Academy has put out yet another large bibliography on Nepal. This work definitely constitutes the third major landmark in the publication of bibliographic literature on this country; the previous two being Hugh Wood's compilation (Nepal Bibliography, 1959, Kathmandu, Bureau of Publication, College of Education), the first of its kind on Nepal and the second being the French bibliography of the C.N.R.S. (Bibliographie du Nepal, Vol I, Sciences Humaines, References in langues europeennes, L. Boulnois - H. Millot, 1969, CNRS, Paris). Scores of other smaller and more specialized compilations of limited utility have appeared in the intervening period. The French bibliography, however, stands out among them as the most thoroughly done work so far, approaching a high standard of academic accomplishment. In preparing their bibliography, the French compilers had not only tapped the diverse and highly scattered sources of collections on Nepal, but also read each entry as far as possible, summarised the works and presented them in an easily referred to way, giving subject classifications, alphabetic indexes of authors names, the works of anonymous writers etc. Its arrangement proved impeccable and served as a handy model for the compilers of the present bibliography to copy.

Barely six years have passed since the publication of the French bibliography, but the wealth of publications on Nepal has continued unabated. The new bibliography by the Academy is amply justified in trying to cover this new ground. The total number of entries in it (8327) is almost double that of the French bibliography (4515) and eight times the number in Hugh Wood's work (1244). In this regard the Academy deserves our felicitations. They have indeed included a great many new titles, especially the writings of Nepalese scholars published in the myriad of journals, magazines, newspapers and bulletins of Nepal. This alone must have enormously taxed the ingenuity of the compilers forcing them to use a meticulous methodology. There is no explanation in the introduction to the work, however, as to exactly what methods were actually adopted in the preparation of the project, or which repositories were used and what sources were exploited to tap the materials published outside Nepal. Also it is unclear whether or not the compilers actually found time to read and check all the entries. It is safe to presume, in view of the magnitude of the work, that they probably did not. The lack of a more intimate knowledge of the contents of the titles has led to a profusion of mistakes especially in placing titles under the wrong subject headings throughout the volume. I will give just one example of this. H.B. Gurung's article on the

intellectual myth (entry number 3006), a writing with current social relevance, was placed under Legends, Folklores, Mythologies etc. by the compilers.

Compiling a bibliography - especially a good bibliography - requires skilled personnel and a basic research infrastructure which is not developed, as yet, in Nepal. It would have been good to have weighed all the possible hazards in undertaking such work. In stating the objectives of the work, the introduction of the bibliography merely states,

under the programme of producing source materials on Nepal, the Royal Nepal Academy included in the Five Year Plan (1969-1973 A.D.) the compilation of a Bibliography of Nepal as a supplement. It is divided into two parts: (1) the list of books and articles written in foreign languages and (2) that of similar things written exclusively in Nepali language. The Royal Nepal Academy gave priority to the compilation of the list of the first category of books.*

Although the Academy made its plan and its priorities quite clear and proceeded accordingly, the spontaneous reaction to this publication by most Nepalese has been the feeling that the Academy's efforts would have been better directed toward first compiling works published in the languages of Nepal. This would have made their work original and would have made it a valuable complement to the bibliographies already published. This would have been a most apt work worthy of the Academy's banner. Although so much was missed, the work has not been deprived of the Nepali touch, since a brief Nepali translation of the title has been added at the end of each entry along with the authors name translated into Devanagari. The only flaw in this scheme is that the unadapted Devanagari alphabet does not do phonetic justice to European names, so quite often, the names look odd.

The bibliography also seems to be finished some what unsatisfactorily in one other way; that is in the preparation of the subject heading classification. Different subjects have been grouped in an illogical manner. History, for example, is placed with biography, politics and government, whereas archeology is included with arts such as painting, music and dance. Further, numismatics is treated as distinct from archeology and has its own heading. Inscriptions have been placed alongside language and literature. Numismatics and inscriptions would have best been

* By the titles written in foreign languages, the publishers must have meant foreign publications in European languages only, because publication in foreign Oriental languages have been completely excluded from listing.

served by putting both of them under archeology. The anthropological-sociological heading has been divided most subtly into three separate subject headings. If such distinctions had been based on a real critical examination of the contents of the works the case. Such subtle headings might have been quite helpful, but such is not. The works are placed quite haphazardly into these three categories and only add confusion.

The above criticism cannot diminish the work's usefulness to scholars engaged in Nepalese studies and many will find they owe a debt to the Academy. There are far fewer mistakes in this work than might be expected in view of the large number of unfamiliar European languages with which the editors had to work. This shows that the compilers worked hard at proof-reading. A hard cover would have been more welcome in a large volume such as this, but prospective buyers were probably spared the further burden of a higher price.

P.R.S.

Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, by Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty, London, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 386.

Wendy O' Flaherty has been writing on the various forms of Siva since 1969. This book gives us her most recent views on the Siva mythology and the interpretation of the Siva myths.

Until the recent emergence of empirical science, questions about the world were often answered through myths and to some extent it is so even today. These myths were replaced gradually by the concepts, and theories of science, and as science developed, it was turned towards the analysis of the myths themselves, leading to interpretations by various scholars each orientated by his own discipline. Among these students of mythology, Levi Strauss is one whose analyses have given a new magnitude to the subject. His four volumes of Mythologies deal with the meaning, structure and interrelations of 813 North and South American Indian Myths. Levi Strauss uses what he calls structural analysis and points to a universality in the structure of all myths despite variations in their content. We find that in his structural study of myths, the unconscious and binary oppositions are the two guiding principles of mythological structure. His technique for analysing myths recommends breaking a myth down into smaller units which he calls "mythemes", analogous to the linguistics' breaking down of complex language phenomena into smaller units such as morphemes or phonemes.

In this book, Mrs. Flaherty has examined a wide range of Sanskrit texts such as the Vedas, Puranas, and Mahabharata. She has examined above all those texts dealing specifically with Siva.

The basic approach for her analysis of the Siva myths is a structural one similar to that of Levi-Strauss. She aims at finding the dialectic pattern which interlocks the various motifs. She does not rely fully on the text-historical method for analysing Indian myths, but uses rather a modified text historical method. In other words, she relies heavily on secondary sources to justify her work.

The book has ten chapters excluding appendices. The first and the last chapters deal with the theory and interconnection of the various motifs in the structural design. Chapters two through eight are devoted to the Siva myths themselves. While describing Siva, other great ascetics like Rsyanga, Cyavana, Agastya, are discussed. The activities of the celestial nymphs, like Mohini, and Tillotama are vividly illustrated. The ascetics' wives like Lopamudra, Krttikas, Arundhati, and Anasuya are discussed in the context of their 'tapas'. Their seduction by gods like Indra, Agni, Vishnu and others are presented in terms of their relation to the myth of Siva. The dual aspects of Siva, i.e. the opposition and identity with Brahma Agni, Indra and Kama are covered as well.

Social structure for Levi-Strauss has nothing to do with empirical reality, but concerns instead models which have been built of it. Similarly, for O' Flaherty, Siva is also a model for Hindu followers. One can fit Siva into one's own interests and needs: the ascetic aspect, the erotic aspect, or the ambiguous aspect. Siva as the three-eyed god (ascetic), as the poison eater (ascetic), as the clever dancer (erotic), as the rider of the bull (erotic), as the wandering beggar (ambiguous) and as the god whose Linga is worshipped by yoga (ambiguous) are models for Hindus and for the yogi himself. The god might appear in which ever aspect fits the worshipper's need.

The 'opposition' factor distinctive to Levi Strauss' structural study of myths is also used by O' Flaherty in analysing the Siva myths. While reading this book, one can clearly note that Siva in one aspect is fully ascetic, because he has excessive tejas (brighthess, resplendence). He drinks posion conquers Kama, retains seed, transcends sexual desire and wears ascetic clothes. In opposition, Siva spills seed, marries Sati and Parvati later, he embraces Parvati and plays the sexual game for a thousand years, he comes naked before the wives of the sages of the pine forest and is full of lust for them and seduces them. In one aspect, Siva is a yogi (the ascetic) and another aspect he is a bhogi (the lover of Parvati and one who enjoys everything). The oppositions are also shown in the creative and destructive aspects of Siva. In his creative aspect, Siva marries Parvati and begets sons like Ganesh and Skanda; he undergoes great tapas (austerities) for the creation of the world; he helps Brahma, Vishnu and other gods in the creation and protection of the world; he revives

Kama, etc. In his destructive aspect, Siva has excessive tejas (brilliance); he destroys Kama and his third eye emits excessive heat (fire) which destroys the world. The conflict in the character of Parvati is also made clear. The author writes, "Siva's wife is a yogini, her tapas is necessary in order for her to be able to bear his son/her tapas is so great, that it is too dangerous for her to bear his son" (p. 36).

According to Levi-Strauss, there is a unity in the structure of myths despite variations in their content. Similarly, O' Flaherty says, "Myths involving Siva's erotic /ascetic ambivalence may be viewed as one myth containing several episodes, each of which may appear as a separate myth" (p. 30). In her view, Brahma, Agni, Indra and Kama are all aspects of Siva himself performing different roles in different situations. Here the author explores the abstract philosophy of the Hindus and ultimately their universal faith in one god.

In a subject as difficult as this, when the treatment is based on so many contradicting sources, opinions must often diverge. The reviewer feels that Mrs. O' Flaherty is trying to idealize things, because she feels she must treat the whole Hindu-Siva philosophy as if it were a model. The model, in other words, is an ideal perception which is necessarily less complicated than the reality which Siva represents. By reducing her material to this model, she has made reality easier to manipulate. This however may miss the point of the reality that Siva represents to the Hindu, a reality that is not always amenable to manipulation. In every idealized model, there is an imposed structure. In this book, Siva including Parvati, Brahma, Agni, Indra and Kama are all models and in the author's words are not a concrete reality. How far Hindu followers are going to be willing to accept this interpretation of an idealized model of Siva is a moot point. The main emphasis of this structural method is on the relationships between phenomena rather than on the phenomena themselves. In this case, the search for invariants at the most abstract level allows her to put familiar facts together in such an unfamiliar way that one is forced to see things which were previously not apparent. Her analysis of myths sheds new light on the logical development and structure of myths in general and for her Siva develops an even newer aspect, that of model, a structural analysis of a corpus of written material. Here its originality lies.

This book, in other words, is a challenge to the many traditional Sankritists. The book presents a new dimension in our understanding of Siva.

D. R. Dahal.

Himalayan Traders: Life in Highland Nepal by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, John Murray, London, England, 1975, 316 pages with maps and photographs, Price: £ 7.50.

In our last issue of Contributions (Vol. 2, No. 2), we announced the publication of a new work edited by Fürer-Haimendorf called Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal. This book was edited from papers given at a "symposium" held in London in 1973. Several papers in that volume referred to a forthcoming book on trade in highland Nepal, but the title and date of publication differed from reference to reference. It was apparent from the tantalizing quotes in these articles, that a major new work was about to be released, but for those of us who had no access to the obviously then circulating manuscript, the book remained ephemeral.

Himalayan Traders has been published at last and should be available in Kathmandu very soon. The book covers various aspects of social organization of trading societies across the high mountain regions of Nepal. Some accounts present more detail than others, due, for the most part, to the amount of time Fürer-Haimendorf was able to spend in that particular area. The scope of the work, however, is staggering, particularly if one considers the number of miles covered over back trails in Nepal's rural mountain areas.

For the most part (and there are some notable exceptions) Haimendorf represents a vanishing breed of explorer-anthropologist. Relying heavily on local assistants (and these assistants, now considerably older and more experienced are all remarkable men and researchers in their own right) and covering vast amounts of territory, these researchers present preliminary data on many different groups and map out problems which later researchers then spend considerable time trying to solve. This is by no means a criticism. In effect, men like Fürer-Haimendorf have given many of us our bearings. I have talked with many who have worked with Haimendorf and some who happened to have been in the field when he has come through. All credit him with an amazing amount of energy and the ability to ask the right people the right questions and quickly get answers in spite of linguistic handicaps. He has also done important long-term field work, particularly his work with the Sherpas which is still a classic in this region.

The richest section of Himalayan Traders draws heavily on this work with the Sherpas, and the organization of this section sets the pattern for the organization of the other chapters in this book. Patterns of settlement, agriculture, animal husbandry are discussed, along with the known history of the Sherpa. The older material is updated in view of a subsequent trip to the area, giving a picture of changes brought about by tourism, panchayat and changes in the political climate. The shortness of

this subsequent trip and the heavy reliance of the older data, however, may leave the reader confused as to which cultural phenomena are still prevalent and which are not.

The "Traders of the Daulagiri Zone" presents material on the Thakali, the Baragaonli and the peoples of Dolpo and Lo. Part of this account is similar to Haimendorf's essay, "Caste Concepts and Status Distinctions in Buddhist Communities of Western Nepal," to be found in the now, unfortunately, out-of-print Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon edited by the same author. The historical data has been greatly expanded and more data on the social structure of the Baragaonli has been presented along with a shift of emphasis to trade, but the data appears to come from the same period of work. I am puzzled by some of the historical data presented, particularly the relationship between the Thakali and the Kingdom of Galkot in the pre-Prithwi Narayan period. Although I am in no position to dispute his findings, I would be more comfortable if he had quoted and cited some of his evidence. A serious flaw in this work is its shortage of documentary evidence, particularly in dealing with Nepal's history.

Haimendorf's account of Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot presents a great deal of new data. Particularly interesting is the comparison between the Thakuri and Bhotiya traders in Humla. The area is interesting since here is one of the few places in Nepal where a Hindu group is involved in trade (a possible exception is the Byansi, but there, Tibetan origins seem likely).

In all of the accounts, the data on trade is most exhaustive. Traded commodities and their market structures are discussed particularly the trade in wool, livestock, grain, and of course, salt. There is good historical data on customs contracts and market strategies. The effects of politics, geography, climate and social structure (particularly marriage, and mit relations) are discussed relative to their effect on trade.

Several sections of this book present only sketches of ethnographies. This too is not a criticism, but should be taken (as Fürer-Haimendorf mentions) as indications of where further work needs to be done. His account of the Lhomi of the upper Arun Khola should inspire someone to do further work in the area. There are also some preliminary notes on the Byansi and the Tarali of western Nepal. Many of the peoples covered in Haimendorf's earlier works (such as the Sherpa, Thakali and people of Jumla and Humla) are now the object of intense interest to other anthropologists working in Nepal. One only hopes that Fürer-Haimendorf will continue to have his proven ability to generate interest in work on other areas in Nepal.

The last chapter of the book entitled, "Trade and Social Relations" presents the theoretical significance of such research

on trading societies in Nepal, plus it presents an excellent synthesis of the material covered in the rest of the book. In this section, Haimendorf states that trade among these groups is due neither to historical accident nor to their own choosing. Trading is due rather to first, the necessity to make up for an inadequate food supply caused by ecological factors (often making it possible for groups to live in areas which otherwise would be good only for summer pasturage) and secondly, it is due to living in close proximity to a natural channel in the intersices of two complementary economic zones. It is both the need and the opportunity which make trading societies possible. Since economic organization is closely correlated with social relations, in the anthropologist's framework, we are faced with answering the question as to whether "the pursuance of trade as a central economic activity produces certain attitudes and arrangements, or whether people (are) motivated by a specific outlook on life are more likely to achieve success in trading than communities conditioned by a different ideology (287)". In a way, this is the essential question for anthropologists faced with the phenomenal success of certain groups over other groups living in similar areas and hardly able to meet the needs of daily subsistence. The question as to why the Rais, who supplied grain to the Sherpa merchants or the Chhetris who supplied the Thakalis produced no merchant class of their own is answered partially by the emphasis on land ownership by those groups. But Haimendorf also ties the success of these merchant princes to their freedom as Buddhists from the food taboos and family ties of the Hindus. Whether this applies to the Rais is doubtful, and in the case of the other groups, I feel that Haimendorf places undue stress on the egalitarian nature of the Buddhists over the Hindu as it effects trade, particularly in light of the Thakuri traders in Humla and the Byansi. Although the Byansi may have been Buddhists at one time, they have been Hinduized for a considerable period. Perhaps a detailed study of this group may go a long way toward settling the problem of the relation of ideology to success in trade. One agrees that the social structure of the Thakali and Sherpa permits a certain degree of mobility, but what about the Thakali or Sherpa's trading partners in the south, as yet unstudied? The question is by no means settled, but Furer-Haimendorf presents some valuable insights, if for no other reason than by framing the question itself.

The book is quite valuable for its data and for its framing of theoretical questions vital to the interests of anthropologists working in Nepal. Although Haimendorf writes-off historical causation as a possible motivating factor in the formation of trading societies, he presents much valuable historical data. Though many may disagree with an ethnographic point here and there, the overall scope of the book points out how far many of us have to go in our own research.

Andrew E. Manzardo

Objets et Mondes, L'homme et la Haute Montagne : l'Himalaya,
Tome XIV, Fascicule 4, Hiver 1974, Museem de l'Homme, Paris. Price:
about 18F.

Although it is not common practice for one journal to review another journal, we feel that attention should be called to the latest copy of Objets et Mondes. This is the third special issue devoted to the Himalayan region. The journal opens with a picture of Nepal's Annapurna and Daulagiri regions taken from the Earth Resources Technology Satellite from an altitude of about 500 miles, and in a way, the photo symbolizes the studies of the geology and ecology of Nepal done by French researchers.

The magazine contains articles on geology (thermal springs) demography, archeology (done just east of Kathmandu in Timal, the article proposes future research in the Kathmandu and Pokhara basins on questions of earliest settlement), ecology (a description of Himalayan ecology by J.F. Dobremez which links-up to the study by Ph. Alirol found elsewhere in this volume), physical anthropology (an excellent study of the Marpha area in the upper Kali-Gandaki) and anthropoligy (a survey of the upper Seti River by Corneille Jest, movement in the Kali-Gandaki region by Monique Fort and the study by Toffin which appears in translation elsewhere in this volume). In addition, several studies by American and English scholars appear: Philip Denwood's, "Bhutan and its architecture", Messerschmidt's excellent, "Gurung shepherds of Lamjung Himal", Sacherer's, "Sherpas of the Rowaling Valley", and last of all Goldstein's, "Tibetan speaking agropastoralists of Limi", (which represents a continuation of the work on Limi presented by Goldstein in Contributions Vol. 2 No. 2). This journal represents a major political descision on the part of the French, for this is the first volume of the Objets special numbers on Nepal, to contain articles published in English. We welcome this, since it throws the magazine open to a new audience and to an extended number of scholars from whom contributions are now possible.

A.E.M

